

Throughout history, the South City has been Beijing's true center of commerce, book merchants and handicraft sellers.

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For Barcelona, the Universal Forum of Cultures was a chance to recover the international limelight it basked in back in 1992.

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Gao sent a total of 80,000 yuan to help more than 160 AIDS orphans over the past three years.

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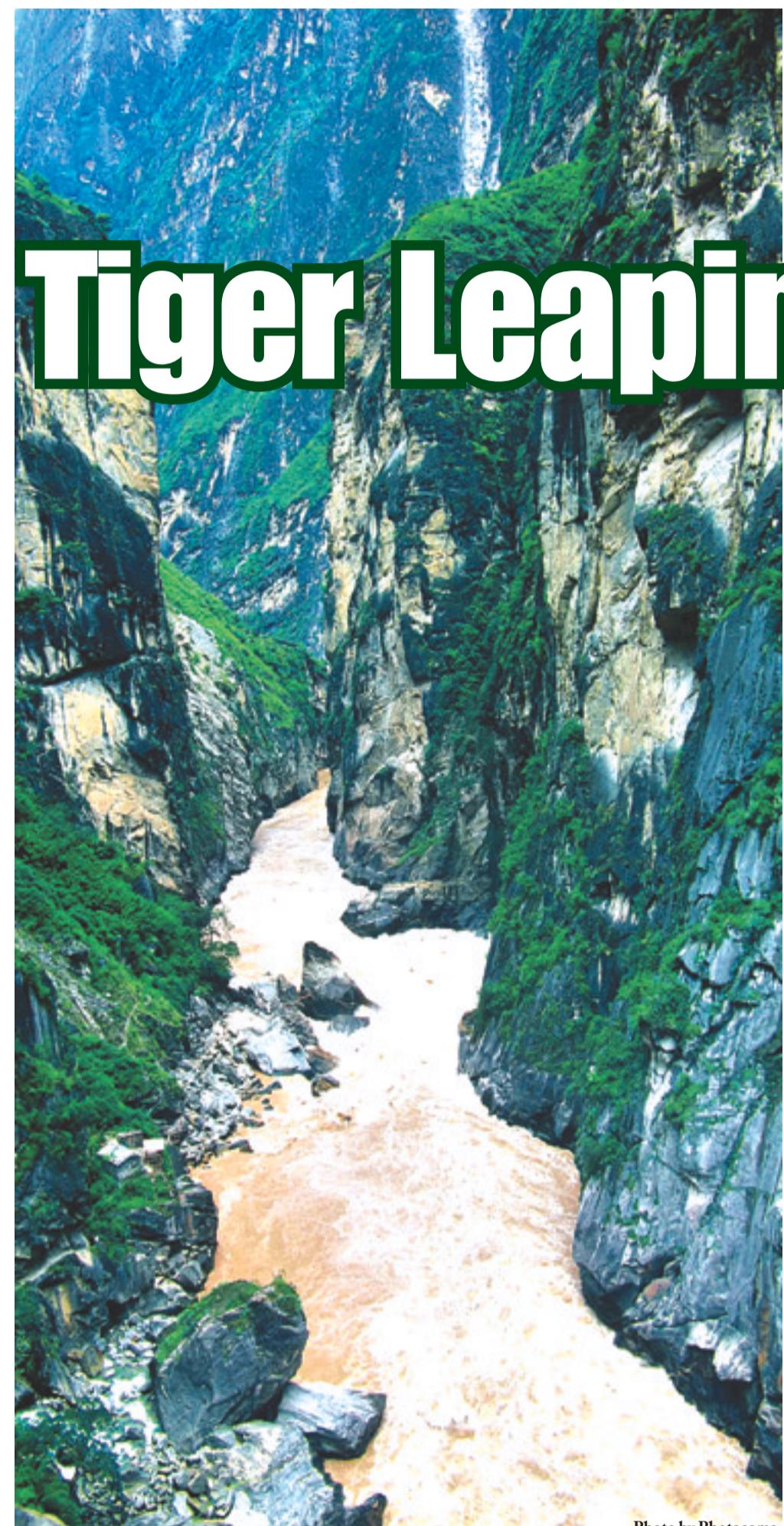


Photo by Photocom

A Walk along the Jinsha River

Simon Winchester described hiking the gorge in 1994. "A couple of miles from the village of Qiatou, the path began to narrow – first to a yard, then to a foot, then to almost nothing. And at the same time the cliffs closed in – 5,000 feet of vertical blackness above my head, 1,000 of vertical terror below me and the foaming river roaring menacingly at the bottom."

But though the path is thrillingly dangerous ... the rewards of being there are incalculable. And none more so than the moment of arrival at the midway point, the village of Walnut Grove. You round a bend, hugging the safety of the cliffside, daring not to look down – and then suddenly ahead, so very welcoming because it is, at long last, something safely horizontal, is a mile of shining rice paddies and vivid green fields. Above these fields, all grace and upswept tiled eaves, and with blue smoke curling from a score of chimneys."

International River Recovery Plans

Australia

Since the building of a series of dams on the Snowy River in southeast Australia in the 1950s and 60s, the river's flow has been reduced by 99 percent in its lower reaches, with devastating consequences to the river and river valley's ecosystems. The federal government signed an agreement with the governments of Victoria and New South Wales in 2000 to recover the runoff capacity to 15 percent of its original capacity within seven years and eventually to 28 percent.

Zambia

The Kafue River Plain, with an area of 6,500 square kilometers and population of 700,000, is reckoned as an important wetland. Two big dams were built across the river in 1969 and 1976. Since then, radical changes have been seen in hydrographic trends, while the quantity of species, fishery output and grazing lands have sharply decreased. Experts from the World Wide Fund for Nature are now engaged in an environmental rescue project for the Kafue River.

Switzerland

There is a kind of trademark for electronic power called "Power Star" in Switzerland, under which people can buy electricity at a preferential price. In order to qualify for the Power Star trademark, electricity suppliers must endeavor to fulfill certain environmental requirements. Moreover, they must invest part of their income in a fund for environmental improvement that sponsors projects such as habitat recovery.

Gorge ... or Dam

By Chu Meng

Running between Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and Haba Snow Mountain in the north-west of Yunnan Province, Tiger Leaping Gorge is among the world's deepest canyons. Confined between the narrow cliff walls, the torrential Jinsha River roars and crashes spectacularly over grotesquely shaped rocks through the 18-kilometer gorge.

Flowing parallel with the Nujiang and Lancang rivers south for 170 kilometers, the Jinsha River almost reverses direction in a 135 degree turn at Shigu, forming what is known as "the first bend of the Yangtze River." It then flows placidly for a further 30 kilometers before plunging into Tiger Leaping Gorge, or Hutiaoxia, as it is called in Chinese.

According to local legend, the gorge is so named because, at its narrowest point, a tiger once leaped over the swirling waters.

The gorge has attracted a steadily increasing number of tourists in recent years with the improvement of access to this once remote region, but reports that the provincial government is planning to dam the gorge has attracted attention of a different kind.

The hydroelectric dam at Tiger Leaping Gorge is a joint project between the government of Yunnan province and Yunnan Lancangjiang Hydropower Development Corporation, a subsidiary of China Huaneng Group. Preparation work for the construction of the dam has already begun, an official from the Yunnan Provincial Environmental Protection Bureau confirmed to *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

An ideal location?

The Jinsha River is the name for the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. "The middle reach of the Jinsha has a favorable condition for development. When completed, the dam will have an overall capacity of 20 million kilowatts," the official said.

Xinhua News Agency reported as early as April 2002 that the Kunming Institute of Survey and Design and Zhongnan Institute of Survey and Design, both branches of State Power Corp, had drafted and submitted plans for the dam to the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and asked an expert group from the National Hydropower and Water Resources Planning and Design General Institute to conduct an analysis and feasibility study.

On July 27, 2004, the dam project was approved by the NDRC, despite the lack of a report by the National Environmental Protection Bureau or a long-term seismic inspection report from the National Earthquake Administration, both of which are required under state law for a project of

this scale.

Opposition mobilizes

A workshop under the title "Serious Analysis of Overheated Hydroelectric Exploitation of Southwest China's Rivers" was held in Beijing last Sunday. Sponsored by environmental related NGOs including China Green, the Institute of Environment and Development, ALashan Society and the Institute of International Environment Studies, participants called for the construction of the Tiger Leaping Gorge Hydroelectric Dam to be halted in view of its negative influence on the ecology, geology and social culture of the surrounding environment.

Xiao Liangzhong, an anthropologist from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a zealous environmentalist was one of the participants in the workshop. He told *Beijing Today* Tuesday, "The dam is not feasible, for it will bring about serious and irreparable problems to the local ecological and geological systems, as well as the social culture of the region. The planning statement claims the dam will bring enormous economic benefits, but that is absolutely not the case."

According to Xiao's analysis, firstly, the raised water level caused by the dam will damage the local ecological system and destroy a wide range of species.

Secondly, "by sharing their universal values and keeping their own unique culture and ethnic identities, local ethnic groups have been co-inhabiting this area and creating a unique culture together. This is one of very few successful models for such peaceful coexistence in a multi-ethnic region. If the dam is built, a series of immigration-related problems will emerge which will eventually ruin this deep-rooted harmony," he said.

In addition, Xiao points out that a great quantity of ancient stone coffins, tombs and cremation sites are located here, as well as rock paintings and stone tablets. Cultural relics and historical sites have not been excavated or researched yet. Some ancient village building patterns and foundations are still in good condition, all of which demonstrates that it is a place with a rich cultural accumulation. Flooding the area would cause an immeasurable cultural loss.

Moreover geological structural movement and topographical changes have frequently occurred in this basin, demonstrating that the area is in a relatively unstable seismic belt. He Xuesong, a scholar from the National Earthquake Administration's Institute of Geology and Geophysics, told *Beijing Today* in an interview Wednesday, "Building a terraced hydropower station in this type of geographical environment could lead to consequences that are just unimaginable."

Wang Yongchen, president of an environmental protection NGO China Green and an editor at China People's Radio, told *Beijing Today* Monday, "Under the agreement, Yunnan Lancangjiang Hydropower Development Corporation would pay the Li-jiang local government 400 million yuan, which is twice its total annual income. The project is extremely harmful in environmental terms, and has received no environmental evaluation report from the National Environmental Protection Bureau and no long-term stable seismic inspection report from the National Earthquake Administration."

Not just about economics

Wang Hui, professor from Tsinghua University's School of Humanities and Social Science told *Beijing Today* yesterday, "the GDP-oriented development mode has been deeply rooted in all levels of government departments for a long time." He pointed out that more needs to be taken into consideration than just economic benefits when assessing the viability of a hydroelectric dam project such as this. "We should also pay attention to what the local villagers say, after all it has been their home for generations, and will be still after the dam is finished. Therefore, we should promote an environmental justice development strategy. Moreover, we should not rigidly copy one mode just because it is successful elsewhere. Every place has its own unique characteristics."

Southern Weekend reported Wednesday that an official from the National Environmental Protection Bureau said they had no information about the hydroelectric dam project. *Beijing Today* confirmed this yesterday with Mou Guangfeng, of the bureau's Supervision and Administration Department. Mou said "we don't know about this project yet, and we haven't read the report in *Southern Weekend*. As a general procedure, any construction project with an investment of over 100 million yuan would be under the direct administration of the NDRC, not the local department, like this one. Generally speaking, the local government should first carry out a feasibility study, then submit the plan to the NDRC. After it gets approval in an environmental evaluation report, then the NDRC will begin its inspection and decide whether to grant approval or not."

Wang Yongchen commented, "In my opinion, it is impossible for the NDRC not to have been informed, because Tiger Leaping Gorge is within the Three Rivers Drainage Basin. This area was listed as a World Cultural and Natural Heritage site in 2003, so any construction projects there would be very sensitive to the bureau and the NDRC. On the other hand, such a project, tangled with many economic benefits, would probably involve under-the-table negotiations by the involved investment corporation and local government. Thus the bureau is kept in the dark."

The official from the Yunnan Provincial Environmental Protection Bureau told *Beijing Today*, "The Yunnan government removed Tiger Leaping Gorge from the application report to UNESCO. Now they can say that the dam would be constructed outside the protection range of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage Site."

In July this year, UNESCO warned China that it must improve protection of that area, or risk it being delisted. "Fortunately, since 2002 the NDRC hasn't given further approval to this project and discussions from all quarters of society are leading to more and more resistance. And in February this year, Premier Wen Jiabao even ordered that the illegal construction of 13 dams along the Nujiang River be halted," Wang said.

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SOE Management Buy-outs Declared Inappropriate

By Sun Yongjian

The central government has ruled out allowing management buy-outs in large state-owned enterprises, an article in Wednesday's *People's Daily* reports.

The article, issued by the research office of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC), says that management buy-outs are improper in large state-owned enterprises at the present time.

An SASAC official, who did not reveal his name, told *Shanghai*

Securities yesterday that the article was intended to answer a controversial argument between Lang Xianping, a professor of finance from Chinese University of Hong Kong and Gu Chunjun, the president of domestic refrigerator manufacturer Greencool, about whether or not management buy-outs would cause the loss of state-owned assets.

"As a measure of system reform and a way to encourage the activities of administrations in state-owned small and medium-sized enterprises, many necessary conditions are needed, without which,

once the buy-out is launched, loss of state-owned assets can easily occur," the article says.

"Ownership and running rights will be merged into one when a management buy-out is launched. This will be unfavorable for forming an efficient company governance structure and sustaining a market oriented administrative mechanism."

"The loss of state-owned assets will be unavoidable if a management buy-out is launched without consideration of the actual conditions in China," the article says.

However the SASAC suggests

that a pilot management buy-out in a small or medium-sized SOE can be launched, providing the legal rights and profits of the investors, creditors and staff are protected.

The allowable criteria for a management buy-out in small or medium-sized enterprises are divided into industry type, construction type and retail type, with either 400 million yuan in total assets or 300 million yuan turnover a requirement for the first two types and a 150 million yuan turnover for the third type.

Downgrading QFII Qualification to Boost Stock Market

By Annie Wei

Foreign capital will be able to enter China's stock market more easily if a new management regulation on QFII investment in securities is passed, according to an article in last Saturday's *Beijing News*.

QFII (Qualified Foreign Institutional Investors) was introduced at the end of 2002 as a provision for foreign capital to access to China's financial markets.

Under the new regulation, currently awaiting approval by the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC), requirements on investors' qualification, border securities and investment percentage, capital remittance and sub-account opening will be downgraded, including a reduction in the amount required for QFII in securities from at least \$10 billion to \$5 billion.

The article said the downgrading would allow more fund management institutions to apply for QFII in China, especially middle and small-scale investment institutions from the other Asian countries, which would help boost the stock market.

The State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) announced on September 15 that Switzerland's UBS AG, Citigroup Global Markets Limited and Nikko Asset Management, are allowed to invest US \$200 million respectively.

An announcement on SAFE's website also revealed that Societe Generale, of France, has been authorized to invest \$50 million, and the Netherlands' ABN AMRO Bank \$75 million.

Till now, the total amount granted on QFII in China is only \$2.7 billion, due to the strict requirements.

According to current QFII management methods, foreign capital entering China is limited, especially in terms of the asset management amount, business running period and registered capital.

A spokesman for SAFE told *Beijing Today* Wednesday that as yet, no information had been released officially on new QFII management methods.



Traffic Management Improved on Airport Expressway

By Annie Wei

Changes to traffic control on Beijing's Airport Expressway are expected to improve traffic flow on the heavily used thoroughfare, according to a report in Tuesday's *Beijing Morning Post*.

Both sides of the expressway are separated into three lanes, with different speed limits applying to each lane. The left lane may

only be used by cars and mini-buses, and has maximum and minimum speed limits respectively of 120 and 100 kilometers per hour. The center lane has maximum and minimum speed limits of 100 and 80 kilometers per hour; and the right lane, 100 and 60 kilometers per hour.

All traffic signs along the expressway have been changed

to reflect the new limits, according to the report.

Song Kezhu, an engineer from the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau, was quoted in the article as saying that under the previous system, the left lane could only be used as an overtaking lane, which unnecessarily restricted traffic to the center and right lanes.

New Rules to Protect Small Investors

By Sun Yongjian

Minority shareholders of listed companies will be granted more rights to participate in the companies' major decisions and more opportunities to see financial returns, according to a draft document issued by China's securities watchdog on Monday.

The document was published

on the website of the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) Sunday. Issues that have a major impact on the interest of public investors, such as new share issuance, convertible bond issuance, major asset restructuring and overseas listing of subsidiaries, would have to obtain approval from more than half the public investors in a vote.

As another key factor in protecting the small investors, the role of independent directors is also reaffirmed in the draft document for strengthening the supervision of listed companies' operations.

Important affairs such as

hiring or firing of accounting companies should be agreed to by more than half the independent directors before it is proposed to the board of directors, and directors cannot be removed before the end of their term without proper reason.

The document also enhances the responsibilities of listed firms on information disclosure and profit distribution.

The document will be open for public comment until October 15. The CSRC says it will make amendments if warranted by public opinion and then formally enact the document.

Used Car Market Opens to Foreigners

By Annie Wei

The Ministry of Commerce announced a draft regulation on used car management Monday. According to the draft, foreigners may now invest in used-car trading markets or companies.

To enter the used car market, apart from following relevant regulations in the city the company is registered in, a company must provide venue and facilities for used car business, and be able to provide evaluation, transfer, registration and insurance on used cars.

The draft also separates business between used-car trading markets and used car dealerships. The latter are required to have a stable place of business and capacity of purchasing and selling used cars.

At the same time, the ministry released a draft on vehicle branding sales management. It says that vehicle suppliers should make available to the public a list of its authorized or dis-authorized sales and service distributors. Vehicle suppliers should not provide cars to distributors who are not qualified or authorized.

Also, the new management draft requires a maximal 150 kilometers between car distributor and related parts suppliers and service places.

Banking Concerns Raised in National Financial Report

By Annie Wei

A financial report released last Friday highlights three hidden dangers that threaten the reform of the banking sector, according to Monday's *Morning Post*.

The China Financial Report 2004 was compiled by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Banking and Finance.

Li Yang, director of the institute, was quoted in the article as saying that although the business operation situation and non-goods assets had seen an improvement in 2003, there remained serious

problems in terms of profitability, assets safety and capital mobility, and these issues were getting worse in 2004.

According to the article, the business mode of domestic banks is dependant on accumulating money from deposits and accruing interest from loans.

This single mode business makes bank assets unsafe, Li Yang said, "When the economy is down, banks' non-performing loans are up."

Because the banks cannot decrease their risk by varying

methods of business and assets, exposure to risk rises when loans increase as the economy grows. When economic growth slows, a bad-loans situation appears.

Fitch, an international credit rating agency, was quoted in the same article as saying that the huge amount of loans from Chinese banks issued in the period of over-heated economy recently might become new bad loans if they cannot be returned.

Li Yang also said that although the amount of short-term loans had decreased, the long-term

loans had increased.

Among the new loans in 2003, middle or long term ones take up 94.5 percent, an increase of 43.5 percent from 2002.

Tang Min, chief economist of the Asian Development Bank, was quoted as saying that although the loan amount was controlled, middle or long-term loans had increased.

Li Yang described the root problem for profitability, assets safety and capital mobility in banking as "the retarding of capital market development, which results in the poor risk-share system of banks."

Ground Broken on Sino-Kazakhstan Oil Pipeline

By Qiu Jiaojing

China and Kazakhstan held a ceremony Tuesday to mark the start of construction of an oil pipeline from Atasu in Kazakhstan to Alashankou in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Xinhua net reported Wednesday.

The 970 kilometer Atasu-Alashankou pipeline will cost an estimated US \$700 million. When the first phase is completed in 2005, the pipeline will have an annual capacity of 100 million tons. The second phase, with a capacity of 200 million tons annually, will be completed by 2011.

The Sino-Kazakhstan oil

pipeline was first proposed by the two governments in 1997. In May 2004, an agreement on the construction of Atasu-Alashankou pipeline was signed between China National Petroleum Corp and Kazakhstan National Petroleum.

On completion, the pipeline will have a total length of over 3,000 kilometers and comprise of three sections; the Atyrau-Kenkiyak section, Kenkiyak-Atasu section and Atasu-Alashankou section.

Located on the coastal region of the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan's oil reserves of 4.6 billion tons are the third richest in the world.

Fund Company Regulations Issued

By Sun Yongjian

China Securities Regulatory Commission issued two sets of regulations last month on the principles of operation of securities companies and the senior administrative staff in such companies, *Shanghai Securities* reported Monday. The two regulations are effective as of today.

The regulations on fund company administration consist of seven parts, covering issues such as the conditions

for establishing a fund administrative company, governance structure and internal control.

The regulations on senior administrative staff consist of six parts, covering such issues as the conditions of the board directors, general managers and fund managers and their administrative rights.

According to the regulations, individuals are still barred from holding shares in fund management companies.

Shenzhen Introduces Audit System for Government Projects

By Annie Wei

The Shenzhen government has issued a regulation stipulating an audit system for government invested projects.

The regulation, the first of its kind in China, was published in the *Shenzhen Government Gazette* last Thursday.

According to the new regulation, an overall audit is to be implemented in all projects invested by government, and further audits are to be carried at all stages of important projects. Meanwhile supervision and management of proj-

ect audits are separated.

In an article published in Tuesday's *Shenzhen Economic Daily*, Chen Zhigang of the Shenzhen Audit Bureau outlined the procedure of audit and supervision of government investing projects, and explained how the audit bureau had the power to implement supervision legally.

Shenzhen municipal audit bureau has discovered and rectified many illegal projects, saving over 5 billion yuan from 1998 to 2003, according to an article in *Shenzhen Daily* on last Friday.

Top 100 Counties Announced

By Qiu Jiaojing

The State Statistics Bureau announced the list of China's top 100 counties last Saturday.

Topping the list is Shunde County in Guangdong Province, followed by Kunshan and Jiangyin counties, Shunde ranks first on the list for the fourth successive year.

The top 100 account for 23.5 percent of the total GDP of all counties, with only 1.3 percent of the total area and 7 percent of the total population.

Classifications to be Issued for Computer Games

By Qiu Jiaojing

A committee set up to monitor computer games and their effects on young people has recommended the introduction of a standard to grade such games, *Beijing Times* reported Monday.

The committee was set up by the Sino Youth Association for Network Development last Sunday and made the recommendation the same day.

The proposed standard consists of five static indicators such as violence and sexual content and seven dynamic indicators, such as online chat-

ting. According to the different indicators, computer games can be classified into three grades; suitable for junior middle school students, suitable for senior middle school students and suitable for those over 18 years old.

The committee has already published appraisal results of some popular games on its website (www.game315.com/yxj). Following publication of its first list of approved games, the committee will promote those games through net cafes, children's community centers and schools.

Public Security Review

Beijing's 110 emergency hotline received 23 percent more calls this week than in the preceding week, and 296 criminal suspects have been apprehended after investigations.

With the week-long National Day holiday approaching, police have strengthened crackdowns on various kinds of criminal activities to ensure security and stability during the holiday.

Break-ins mostly occurred at Jiuxianqiao, Pingfang and Wali in Chaoyang, Longtan in Chong-

gwen, Qingtao in Fengtai, Donghuamen in Dongcheng, as well as Beitaipingzhuang and Wahshou in Haidian late at night and during the day, while thefts occurred most frequently at Bai-zhifang and Dashilan in Chongwen, Dazhongsi and Qinghe in Haidian and Fengtai in Fengtai.

Police are urging citizens to take care of their goods and not to carry valuables when traveling during the holidays.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

Stock Exchange Introduces Primary Dealer System

By Sun Yongjian

The Shenzhen Stock Exchange announced through its website on Sunday that the new primary dealer system would be launched to cover transactions of a new listed open-ended fund, or LOF, when sales began on Wednesday.

A primary dealer is a qualified member of the Shenzhen Stock Market appointed to be in

charge of continuous price quoting and relevant affairs in accordance with regulations covering LOF business. Primary dealers are also allowed to conduct securities transactions with investors using their own assets, according to an article in the *Economic Survey* newspaper on Sunday.

Shi Zhenguo, an analyst for Beijing Securities Company, told

Beijing Today the primary dealer system could inject new dynamism into the slumping market.

Primary dealers would be allowed to keep a portion of transacted funds and handle deals according to market conditions and with an obligation to try to spur market liquidity, Shi said.

"This is the right time to launch the primary dealer sys-

tem because domestic stock markets are declining and liquidity is needed to spur a recovery," Shi said.

Eight securities companies, including Guotai Jun'an Securities, Galaxy Securities and Ping'an Securities, are competing for primary dealer status, according to information from the Shenzhen Stock Exchange.

Viacom, BTV Team Up

By Wei Lixin

Viacom Chairman and CEO Sumner R. Redstone announced last Friday several milestones for his company's business in China, including a strategic partnership with Beijing Television (BTV) for production of music and entertainment content, the *Financial Times* reported last Friday.

"A formal written agreement was signed last Friday, but no more details can be revealed as yet," Chen Yi, manager of the public relations department of Viacom's Beijing office told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

The Viacom-BTV partnership will produce Chinese language music and entertainment programming for distribution to the local television network's channels and other TV channels across China and the world.

"The programs of the cooperation with BTV will be available from January 1, 2005," Li Yifei, managing director of MTV China, a Viacom subsidiary, was quoted as saying in last Friday's *China Daily*.

In March, Viacom announced the establishment of its first domestic production joint venture with Shanghai Media Group (SMG). That company would focus on creating Chinese language programming for children for distribution in China and abroad, it said.

"Partnerships with Chinese companies are central to our long-term strategy, and Viacom's alliances with the two leading regional TV players – Shanghai Media Group and now Beijing Television – represent a significant commitment to producing high quality, locally produced content for audiences in China and around the world," Redstone was quoted as saying in a company news release.

At a press conference in Guangzhou last Friday, the Viacom CEO said that by tripling the distribution of its 24-hour channel in the Guangdong Province by the end of the year, MTV China would extend its reach to nearly 10 million TV households across China.



Chen Yuan (center), governor of China Development Bank, toasts the bond issue with some international backers.

Xinhua Photo

China Development Bank Issues \$1 Billion in Global Bonds

By James Liu

China Development Bank, the largest of China's three policy banks, on Tuesday issued \$1 billion worth of global bonds in New York, with Goldman Sachs and other top investment banks

acting as primary underwriters.

The move included \$600 million of 10-year bonds with an interest rate of 4.75 percent, and 325 million euros of 5-and-a-half-year bonds with an interest rate of 3.875 percent.

The bank said the bond issue was its first time to raise funds on the international capital market since 2000, and the money would go towards support and construction of infrastructure and pillar industries in China.

Foreign Oil Giants Exit East China Sea Gas Project

Royal Dutch/Shell and the Unocal Corporation have withdrawn from one of the largest offshore gas exploitation projects in China, *China Daily* reported Thursday.

The companies pulled out of joint exploration, development and marketing of natural gas resources in the Xihu Trough, with an initial investment of \$85 million, *China Daily* said. The terms of the agreements allowed partners to make final investment decisions after an initial 12-month period of appraisal and analysis.

In a joint press release, CNOOC and Sinopec said Shell and Unocal had decided not to continue participating in the next phase,

Barry Lane, spokesman for US-based Unocal, was quoted as saying, "After the first year of analysis, we found the resources do not meet our commercial requirements."

In early August 2003, Shell, Unocal, CNOOC and Sinopec signed five contracts to explore three blocks and develop two in the Xihu Trough, with an initial investment of \$85 million, *China Daily* said. The terms of the agreements allowed partners to make final investment decisions after an initial 12-month period of appraisal and analysis.

In a joint press release, CNOOC and Sinopec said Shell and Unocal had decided not to continue participating in the next phase, "since both sides have failed to agree on the existing development plan."

"We are confident about the project's future. The change of partners will have little impact on the ongoing project," said Fu Chengyu, chairman and CEO of CNOOC.

(Xinhua)

Commission Considers Creation of Real Estate Super Group

By Annie Wei

A proposal to combine several domestic real estate companies into one "super group" is being carefully mulled over by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC), the *Beijing News* said Saturday.

The office manager of the China Real Estate Association, surnamed Yang, confirmed to *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that the proposal had been submitted by his group's president, Yang Shen, along with Gao Shang, president of the China Enterprises Revolution and Development Study Association.

Yang said the proposal was still being discussed at the SASAC and did not provide more detailed information.

The proposed conglomerate was intended to sort out problems of redundancy and overlapping resources among state-owned real estate companies by establishing one larger, integrated enterprise, the *Beijing News* reported.

The massive firm would include five state-owned real estate companies as well as parts of 189 companies in other industries and have combined assets worth roughly 100 billion yuan.

In June, the SASAC issued a notice that state-owned enterprises active, but not specialized, in the booming real estate market should spin off their real estate arms, which could then be combined with five major state-owned powers in the property field, namely China State Construction Engineering Corp., China Merchants Group, China Real Estate Development Group, China Poly Group Corp. and China Overseas Chinese Town Group.

Handling personnel distribution and financial disputes between member firms could be among the many potential problems created by the formation of such a state-owned real estate super group, an article in the *Economic Observer* noted on July 17.

Li Rongrong, director of the State Economic and Trade Commission, was quoted in the same article as saying that state-owned companies should focus on their core fields of business instead of trying to branch into the lucrative real estate sector.

Communication Giant Lists without IPO

By Sun Yongjian

After receiving official approval from the Hong Kong Stock Exchange last Saturday, TCL Communication Technology Holdings Ltd, a subsidiary of major domestic electronics product maker TCL Group, listed in the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Monday, the *Beijing Times* reported that day.

TCL Communication's listing was done as an introduced listing, very different from more common initial

public offer (IPO) programs and the company would not issue new shares to attract funds, TCL Group General Manager Wan Mingjian was quoted as saying.

The unconventional listing method allows TCL International, another Hong Kong-listed subsidiary of TCL Group, to recommend shares in TCL Communication to its shareholders. Investors can purchase 42 shares in TCL Communication for every 100 shares in TCL International

they own.

TCL Group issued a statement on its website that it has reorganized the equities of TCL Communication to consist of two parts – TCL's mobile phone business, the source of 59 percent of the group's total profits, and the joint venture TCL & Alcatel Mobile Phones Ltd.

The listed company would control 100 percent of the equities of TCL's mobile phone business and 55 percent of TCL & Alcatel, the announcement said.

Network Lures International Clients with New 30 Second Spots

By Annie Wei

China Central Television held its first bidding session for 2005 advertising time in Beijing last Friday, raising the curtain on competition to buy airtime on China's largest television network.

The company announced that its bidding policies had been adjusted to introduce new 10- and 30-second advertising slots.

Guo Zhenxi, director of CCTV's advertising department, was quoted in the *Beijing News* on Saturday as saying that six 10-second ads would be placed before the nightly 7 pm news report on CCTV-1.

The relatively inexpensive short spots were intended to give companies with limited budgets just enough time to introduce their products, Guo said.

The network's first 30-second ads would come after the popular news analysis program *Focus*, or *Jiaodian Fangtan*, making them best suited for international or domestic clients with new products, he added.

Figures from an August report compiled by Nielsen Media Research indicate the viewing rate of the 7 pm news in Beijing was 5.4 percent and that of *Focus* was 4.8 percent.

Communication Bank to List in Shanghai, HK

By Sun Yongjian

Communication Bank is set to hold IPO programs in both the Shanghai stock market and the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the *Beijing News* said on Tuesday.

The office of the bank's board of directors would not confirm the reports on Wednesday.

The *Beijing News* reported the bank would hold the IPOs before the end of the year and

file relevant applications with the China Securities Regulatory Commission.

Through issuing both A-shares and H-shares on the same day in Shanghai and Hong Kong, Communication Bank aimed to raise 20 billion yuan in new funds, through the exact issuing price would not be worked out until after rehearsal IPOs were conducted, the newspaper said.

Changhong Driving to Diversify

By Sun Yongjian

Sichuan Province-based Changhong Electric Co., one of China's leading home appliance producers, on Tuesday signed five agreements to cooperate and co-sponsor four new joint ventures with other domestic enterprises, the *Beijing News* reported on Wednesday.

The company's five new partners come from the IT, logistics, chemical materials and manufacturing industries.

One of the new joint ventures will be Sichuan Changhong Zarva Info Products Co., created by Changhong

and Shanghai city-based IT firm Zarva Technology Co., marking Changhong's entrance into the IT sector.

Two other joint ventures with Mianyang, Sichuan-based enterprises in the electronics and plastic moulds fields will further help Changhong diversify, as will a new joint venture producing and selling chemical products established with a Guangdong Province-based partner.

The appliance maker also signed a strategic cooperation agreement with COSCO Logistics Co. for the export of Changhong products.

Hutchison Joins Building of Shanghai Port

Shanghai International Port (Group) Co. signed a 50-year contract on Thursday with Hutchison Port Holding Ltd, a subsidiary of Hutchison Whampoa, to cooperate in forming the Waigaoqiao Phase Five joint venture project, a massive new section of Shanghai's booming port, *China Daily* said.

Shanghai Port and Hutchison Whampoa, which is controlled by Hong Kong

tycoon Li Ka-shing, would each hold 50 percent shares in the project, which would have total capital of 4 billion yuan (\$482 million), the newspaper said.

The Waigaoqiao Phase Five project, located in the Waigaoqiao region of Shanghai's Pudong District, was designed to accommodate four 10,000-ton berths, two 3,000-ton berths and 14 cranes, *China Daily* reported.

Philips Polishing Brand Lineup

By Wei Lixin

Dutch conglomerate Philips Electronics last week launched a new worldwide brand strategy around the same time that Chinese chief marketing officer Chen Jijun, the company's first regional CMO, assumed office last Monday, according to prominent domestic website *163.com*.

Philips announced it would spend 80 million euros (\$97.6 million) by the

end of the year to launch massive advertising campaigns in select European countries, the United States and China to promote its new brand strategy, dubbed "sense and simplicity".

Philips' sales in China and exports from the country totaled \$7.5 billion last year, up 11.9 percent year-on-year, and the company has set a goal of bringing its revenues in the domestic market up to \$12 billion by 2007.

Ford Offers Rich Rewards for Environmental Protection

By Sun Yongjian

American automaker Ford Motor Company on Monday awarded one million yuan to domestic organizations and individuals credited with making outstanding contributions to the protection of the natural environment.

At the award ceremony, eight government and social organizations, nine education institutions and five university students' environmental protection groups from around the country were recognized and given monetary prizes.

US to Press China on Currency Fluctuation at G7 Meeting

Washington, September 28, (AFP) — The United States plans to urge China to adopt a more flexible exchange rate when Chinese officials join the Group of Seven (G7) finance ministers and central bankers in Washington later this week, US Treasury Secretary John Snow said.

"We're going ... to press them on the currency," Snow said in an interview on CNBC television.

"They're making progress, but it's too slow and we're not satisfied and we're going to reflect that in an hour conversation with them."

"The G7 has called for greater currency flexibility ... and in our meeting with the Chinese we're

going to call attention to the need for greater currency flexibility."

China maintains a peg of 8.28 yuan to the dollar, which is blamed by countries such as the United States for making their goods too costly in China and Chinese-made exports unfairly cheap.

Chinese officials are for the first time to take part in some of the discussions held during a meeting in Washington Friday of top finance authorities from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

Local Report:

In the G7 meeting, China is likely to undertake more pressure

than ever before on its foreign-exchange system. After all, China is the most directly related country in United States' adjustment of balance in trade and current account in this round. Pressure for a revaluation of the renminbi has risen sharply especially in the US, blaming the cheap renminbi, also known as the yuan, as an unfair trade advantage.

For the time being, there is one thing people may confirm: Although better adoption of the market principle and improvement of the currency-exchange system has long been the goal of China's reform on the exchange-rate system, China will not yield to outside pressures to make a decision which is not to its advantage. The exchange-rate system is one of the most important regimes of a country's economic sovereignty.

Chinese financial analysts generally believe that to adjust the renminbi exchange rate directly is inappropriate in the economic transitional period, especially when China is undertaking agricultural restructuring and State-owned enterprises reform and tighten control against financial risks. What needs to be done urgently is to alleviate the appreciation pressure of the renminbi other than increasing its value directly. Meanwhile, by

taking advantage of abundant foreign-exchange reserves, favorable international balance of payment and economic restructuring, China should further improve the exchange-rate forming system and loosen controls on foreign exchange.

So why, after a years' break, is the controversy over China's currency exchange rate being brought up again? Remarks by the US government's think tank fully demonstrate the answers. Fred Bergsten, superintendent of the US Institute for International Economics insisted that if the US wants to narrow its adverse balance on trade, the renminbi will bear the brunt of appreciation.

Zhong Wei, director of Research Center of Finance, Beijing Normal University, reckoned that China may ignore the growing call for appreciation of the renminbi from Japan or southeast Asian countries for China has an adverse balance of trade against these countries and only an appreciable surplus against the EU. But since China has a huge favorable trade balance against the US, if the US stresses a more flexible exchange rate of the renminbi, China will be subject to much harder pressures.

— **Economy Information Daily, September 27 (Wei Lixin)**

The Heat Is On!



Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry (R) and US President George W. Bush stare one another down September 30 in their first presidential debate, a high-stakes political prizefight which could decide their vicious battle for the White House.

Photo by Imaginechina

Japan Halts Citibank's Private Operations

Tokyo, September 18 (AP) — Japanese financial authorities announced they would shut down Citibank's private-banking business in the country after finding "severe legal violations" in its operations.

The Financial Services Agency on Friday ordered private-banking operations be suspended starting Wednesday, putting an end to all new transactions. The government said it plans to revoke Citibank's private-banking licenses in September of next year to discontinue the business entirely.

Citibank in Japan, part of New

York-based Citigroup Inc., said Friday it accepts the orders and will comply with them.

The FSA's action was in response to a request from the Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission of Japan, the nation's stock-market watchdog, which recently inspected Citibank Japan's private-banking operations and identified violations by the bank and its employees.

Citibank Japan issued an apology and said it will work to prevent a recurrence of the violations.

"These sanctions demonstrate the serious consequences of failing

to comply with regulatory requirements and violating our business standards," Citigroup CEO Charles Prince and Robert Willumstad, the company's president and chief operating officer, said in a statement to employees. "We deeply regret the problems that led to the FSA's actions in Japan."

Analyst's Take:

Citibank aims to conduct the private-banking business when expanding into Japan, and now it lost the trust of its wealthy customers who have firmly believed in Citibank's creditable reputation; the punishment is a very serious impediment to its long-term development.

Although Citibank may apply for application for a private-banking license in other countries, it now has to withdraw from the Japan market according to the sanction.

Private-banking business can be called "dazzling gold mines" in banking sectors. In the past few years, the business has generated an average profit rate of 35 percent annually in the US, and the profit growth rates are between 12-15 percent, which is well above that of the other retailing banking business. Citibank, Japan, the second-largest economic entity, will provide a huge benefit from the private-banking business, although the sanction has put a spoke in its wheel.

It can be learned from the case that it is crucial for a renowned financial institution to abide by the local rules when operating worldwide. For Citibank, the infinitely important thing to do now is restore its own credit worthiness.

— **Xu Qianhui, Senior Consultant of Switzerland Hewitt Associates LLC (Wei Lixin)**

against the US dollar from 1:8500 to 1:900 after the blast, and foreign investors' confidence has been hit hard; the negative effect will be visualized gradually.

Secondly, it is beyond any doubt that the election result will play a constructive and active role in the economy's development. Presently, opinion polls give Yudhoyono a high rating and if he actually wins the election, the result can be called the "people's choice" as what he has said during the campaign will greatly restore confidence with investors. Meanwhile, reviewing Yudhoyono's administrative policies proposed in the election, agriculture took a top priority; apparently, Yudhoyono will be unsparing in his efforts to prop up agriculture as soon as he comes to power. It is also unlikely that a sudden influx of capital will pour into Indonesia immediately after the election. In a general way, investors will take an expectant attitude towards the new government for about 100 days before making their decisions.

Finally, taking into account both positive and negative factors, the annual Gross Domestic Product growth rate will reach 5 percent. The elevation of Yudhoyono - the former general with a firm character and explicit policies - will form a strong government that will boost the economy. But vigilant attention should be paid to the following factors: terrorism and secessionism, which deprive safety and stabilization of the economy-developing environment; the country's huge foreign debt; "corrupt-collude-nepotism" (known as KKN in Indonesia) that is rampant in every level of government; and finally, the discriminatory measures and policies towards the local Chinese economy. In Indonesia, there are still 13 discriminatory policies for Chinese, and whether the new government will alter the present enmity towards the Chinese is a moot question by far.

— **Doctor Xu Liping, Institute of Asian-Pacific Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Wei Lixin)**

Aceh a Focus for Yudhoyono

Jakarta, September 23, (CNN.com) — As Indonesia awaits next month's formal announcement that its new president will be Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the former army general has pledged to seek an end to the bloody separatist war in Aceh Province.

Yudhoyono has not yet claimed victory, but with more than 100 million of about 125 million votes already counted, his triumph seems assured.

Yudhoyono, who was the security minister in the administration of Megawati until March this year, holds a clear lead in the country's first direct presidential election.

He has 61 percent of the vote so far compared to 39 percent for Megawati, according to the General Election Commission.

Yudhoyono has promised firm leadership to crack down on corruption and get the economy moving. He has also stressed his national security credentials. Yudhoyono's impending elevation to the presidency is regarded as an economic plus for Indonesia.

Analyst's Take:

Firstly, I'd like to stress that the Jakarta bomb attacks will engender adverse effects continuously on Indonesia's economy for about three to four months. Tourism and the other related industries, including the hotel industry and aviation, have become the first casualty. Moreover, about one million personnel in the tourism industry will face the threat of losing their jobs. Furthermore, the Indonesian currency, fell

Air Canada Emerges from Court Protection, Buys 45 Embraer Jets

Montreal, September 29 (CP) — Scheduled to fly out of bankruptcy-court shelter on Thursday, Air Canada has signed a firm deal to buy 45 Brazilian Embraer 190 aircraft, each seating 93 passengers.

Embraer said the order is worth \$1.35 billion, an amount that would double to \$2.7 billion if options to buy another 45 aircraft are exercised. The announcement Wednesday followed Air Canada's confirmed order Monday for at least 30 Bombardier regional jets worth \$821.2 million, with the prospect of that order increasing to 90 planes worth \$2.45 billion.

The regional jets are a key component of Air Canada's new lower-cost structure, designed to help it win back travellers lost to domestic competitors WestJet, CanJet and Jetsgo.

Air Canada said it will be "business as usual" Thursday as the country's dominant airline officially emerges from 18 months of court protection from creditors.

Dissidents Tell Disney to 'Walk the Walk' or Else

California, September 29 (USA Today) — Dissident former directors Roy Disney and Stanley Gold on Tuesday called a temporary cease-fire in their war with CEO Michael Eisner and the Walt Disney Co.

But they promised to go back on the attack if the Disney board does not deliver on its promises to hire an executive search firm to find Eisner's successor by June — and to deny Eisner the chairmanship if he seeks to reclaim the post after George Mitchell retires.

Calling it a "pause in the action," Roy Disney praised the board's "leadership and independence" for announcing that it will consider outside CEO candidates as well as the sole internal contender President and Chief Operating Officer Robert Iger.

His partner, Gold, said, however, that they will move forward with a proxy fight for an alternative board slate at Disney's spring annual meeting if the board does not show progress in the next few months. "We need to see them walk the walk. If this is some snare or ruse, we'll be right back at it," Gold said.

Blair Promises to Help Threatened Jaguar Workers

London, September 30, (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair has agreed to intervene to try to prevent Ford Motor Company from shutting down the spiritual home of Jaguar cars in central England, trade union sources said.

Workers from the Browns Lane Factory in Coventry met with Blair and with Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown on the sidelines of the Labor Party conference in southern England on Wednesday to discuss the planned shutdown, which threatens 1,150 jobs.

Blair promised to personally voice his concerns to Ford "at the highest level" and urged the company to hold talks with workers and give unions an opportunity to put forward alternative plans, according to the unions involved.

"The intervention of the prime minister and the chancellor is vital and their response to our case has been extremely positive," the Transport and General Workers Union, Amicus and the GMB said in a joint statement.

Ford, wrestling with losses across its European luxury car division, announced last week it would shut down Browns Lane, birthplace of such legendary Jaguar models as the streamlined E-Type, a 1960s motoring icon.

Deutsche Post Sees Big DHL US Loss

Frankfurt, September 29 (Reuters) — Germany's Deutsche Post AG said losses at its US express and logistics business will be 200 million euros (\$246.1 million) greater than expected this year, sending its shares down over 4 percent.

DHL EXPRESS Americas will lose as much as 500 million euros compared to an original planned loss of 300 million for 2004, the company said on Wednesday.

US business will not break even until 2006, a year later than planned, Post AG said, disappointing analysts.

Post AG has had to lower its ambitious targets for the US market as it takes longer than planned to reposition DHL to take on larger US rivals United Parcels Service and FedEx.

The German company bought Airborne Inc., a distant No. 3 competitor in the US courier market, 13 months ago for \$1.12 billion and has been working to combine the business with DHL in the United States, including cutting jobs and consolidating its headquarters.

DHL only has 8 percent of the US market, while its two competitors share about 80 percent.

EPA Names 'Best Commuter' Companies

Washington, September 29 (AP) — Intel Corp., Fannie Mae and Cisco Systems Inc. top a new listing the government plans to offer each year rating companies on the benefits they offer commuting employees.

The Environmental Protection Agency hopes to combat air pollution by encouraging more companies to compete for top spots on its "Best Workplaces for Commuters" list, compiled from Fortune 500 companies.

EPA's honor roll is top-heavy with computer and energy businesses that emphasize telecommuting. Next on the list are USAA, Sun Microsystems Inc., Oracle Corp., Advanced Micro Devices Inc., Texas Instruments Inc., Safeco and EMC Corp.

The EPA wants to encourage more companies to offer such benefits as \$30 or more a month for commuting costs, emergency rides home for parents with children and shower or locker rooms for bike riders.

About 1,070 companies with a total of two million employees participate in EPA voluntary's program.

"Through this program we can have significant environmental benefits like saving fuel and reducing pollution, greenhouse gases and congestion," said Margo Oge, director of the agency's Office of Transportation and Air Quality.

Tower Trips Up Temple Restorations



The TV tower stands in the site of the Temple of the Moon's original alter.

Photo by Zhang Wei

By Zhaoxi Liu

Efforts to restore the Temple of the Moon, or Yuetan, one of Beijing's major ancient structures, have hit a multi-

storey obstacle – a functioning television broadcast tower which has lorded over the center of the site for almost four decades.

The issue has received widespread attention in the local media since officials from the Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics announced the tower stood in the way of restoring the temple's central alter.

The Xicheng District government-led effort intends to return the structures and landscape of the Temple of the Moon to their state when first built over 500 years ago, according to a government press release.

The first phase of the 190 million yuan project, including reconstruction of the temple's wall and main thoroughfare, had been completed and the second stage, in

which actual structures like the bell tower and east and north gates would be refurbished and strengthened, should be wrapped up by the end of the year, the *Beijing News* reported last Saturday.

The tower's presence was likely to throw a spanner in the works of the third phase, which called for reconstruction of the temple's central area, meaning its alter, ritual dressing room and other surrounding structures, the newspaper said.

"See that tower? That is exactly where the altar should be," an employee of the Yuantai Park Management Office, who would not give his name, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

Central Television Transmitting Station, operator of the tower, had also occupied several structures south of

the tower slated for work in the reconstruction campaign, the Xinhua news agency said last Thursday.

"The tower should have been removed long ago. It completely stands out against the ancient buildings here," park visitor Jin Tao said.

The tower was erected in 1966. These days, it serves only as a back-up to a main local transmitter when it undergoes regular maintenance every Tuesday, Xinhua said.

Station head Xiao Dusheng was quoted as saying by the *Beijing Times* that the tower could not be removed until another back-up station had been set up, which would take at least a year.

The Xicheng government and the station were negotiating to find a solution to the problem, Tian Jincheng, deputy director of the dis-

trict's landscaping bureau, told *Beijing Today*.

The Temple of the Moon stands with the likes of the Temple of Heaven (Tiantan) and the Temple of Earth (Ditan) as one of Beijing's five ancient altars. Built in 1530, it was used by emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties to offer sacrifices to the gods of the moon.

In 1955, it was converted into a park by the local government, but it slowly fell into disarray over the years as its walls crumbled and many buildings were occupied by local businesses.

Little of the temple's original appearance was intact when the Xicheng District listed restoration of the ancient site among major items on its work agenda late last year, according to the government news release.



Public Transport Police

Get Geared Up

Cops have added flashlights, PDAs and pepper spray to their previous arsenal of batons and handcuffs.

By Zhaoxi Liu

Liu Hairong, a ticket taker for the Beijing subway system for 20 years, is very impressed by the newly-outfitted police patrolling the station where she works.

"Look at them, they are fully equipped!" Liu told *Beijing Today*. "Very handsome."

Public transportation police across the city were brought up to date last Friday with new equipment packs that include pepper spray, walkie-talkies, flashlights, batons and personal digital assistants, or PDAs, stacked with useful crime-fighting information. The move represented a significant upgrade from their previous handcuffs and batons, the public transportation protection squadron of the Beijing Public Security Department said in a press release.

Officers could choose which items to carry on duty according to their assignments, the *Mirror* newspaper reported last Friday.

The squadron release explained the new equipment was distributed to allow officers perform their duties better and make citizens feel safer.

So far, public response appears to be positive. Subway passenger Tang Gongzheng said, "They seem more trustworthy to me now."

Initial concerns that the added equipment could weigh police down beat have proven unfounded.

A squad officer who asked to be unnamed told *Beijing Today* he felt comfortable handling the new tools. One of the handiest was a folder of legal documents, which can be produced to explain relevant laws to regulation violators, he said.

The officer added that the menacing appearance of the police's new gear also intimidated would-be wrong-doers.

F1 Fever Hits Shopping Street

By Cheng Zheng

Just in time for the running of China's first Formula One race in Shanghai, a store selling official F1 paraphernalia opened last Friday on Wangfujing, Beijing's famed shopping street.

At the time, racing souvenirs had been selling well in Shanghai for weeks, but were all but unavailable to F1 fans in the capital. To fill that gap, Beijing Mengfuhua Investment Group lined up authorization from the Beijing agent of F1-licensed merchandiser Shanghai Racing Commercial Company to first open one shop, followed by 50 more later in the year.

The small store is not very conspicuous, despite its loud red-black color scheme, but has been able to attract a steady stream of F1 buffs.

The shelves are stuffed with all kinds of race-related merchandise, from car models to shirts, hats and jackets. Prices tend to be high, with simple T-shirts fetching 300 to 500 yuan, because all products are authentic, licensed items.

The store's manager, who requested his name not be used, said there was great untapped potential for the F1 brand in the domestic market, adding he hoped the international racing tour would be a household name in China within five years.

Have Foreign Language Skills and Spare Time?

By Zhou Ying

Beijing kicked off a new campaign to bring teachers of foreign tongues to local communities on Saturday morning with the launch of the *Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program Volunteer Group* at the Qinglan Hotel.

Liu Yang, deputy director of the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program Organizing Committee, told *Beijing Today* on Saturday that the volunteers were all selected through public recruitment and would carry out various teaching activities after short periods of free training provided by the Beijing New Oriental School.

"We hope this will be a long-term activity, by which I mean that we hope to set up a stable, excellent group of quality volunteers," Liu added.

Local man Yang Jingxu, 70, said in English that Beijing residents like him really needed regular teachers and good textbooks in order to improve their English skills. "We really feel excited that volunteers can come to our community to help us in learning English," Yang said.

Pawn Shops Unite For Big Sale

By Zhou Ying

Nearly 400 items with a total value of 90 million yuan were put on sale at Baoguo Temple in Xuanwu District on Saturday morning in a combined promotion linking 33 local pawnshops.

This was the first time for pawned items to be offered in such a large public auction, said an employee of the Tianzhong Pawnshop Company, sponsor of the auction, on condition of anonymity.

He explained to *Beijing Today* on Monday that items pawned for up-front cash payments became the property of pawnshops once those loan payments went overdue for certain periods, normally one to three months, and therefore could be resold to the public.

Lang Ying, manager of the Zhongtian Xinda Auction Company, noted that all kinds of valuable items were up for sale, ranging from cars to rare jade articles, jewelry, paintings, home appliances and even apartments and villa homes.

"To our surprise, more than 400 people showed up for the public sale and more than 70 percent of the goods found buyers," Lang said.

Low, low prices explained why sales were so strong, he said.

"Most items were offered at a percentage of their real value. We set prices to cover our costs and monthly interest rates."

Another attractive element of the sale was that most pawnshops were accredited for judging the authenticity and value of gems and gold goods, meaning the quality of foreclosed items was all but guaranteed, Lang said.

Stigmatized as "bloodsuckers" in ancient China, new pawnbrokers nationwide have been pushing to change their images to those of public

"helping hands," places where people can get loans without the hassle of banks. Many pawnshop customers are owners of small businesses denied funds through more traditional means.

"Pawnshops can solve their difficulties in getting funding," Lang said.

Xu Xiaoming, chairman of the Hong Kong Television Professionals Society, accompanied the two Hong Kong actors to the hospital.

Kids Wowed by Massive Mooncake



By Chu Meng

The Kerry Centre Hotel staged a special Mid-autumn Festival mooncake party in its Kowloon Ballroom for 50 kids from Shunyi District's Sun Children Village, a charity organization for children whose parents are serving prison sentences, on September 26.

The highlight of the event, organized two days before the actual festival, was the presentation of a massive mooncake measuring one meter in diameter prepared by hotel chefs. The hotel also provided the needy children with welcome supplies of peanut oil, cooking flour, rice and other staples.

In the spirit of uniting families, the traditional theme of Mid-autumn Festival, dedicated phone lines were set up to allow the children to speak with their missed parents.

"This community initiative is held with the hope of generating a meaningful event for those unfortunate children and give them happier childhoods and healthier educations," Darren Gearing, general manager of the Shangri-La Kerry Centre Hotel told *Beijing Today*.

"I also brought my own son and daughter here, hoping they could share with other kids who lead completely different lives."

Photo by Wang Yumeng

Mock Fight Gets out of Hand – Famed Actors Beat Up Co-star Stage Fight Gets Out of Hand

By Jiang Yongzhu

Hong Kong actors Nicholas Tse and Dicky Cheung on Sunday offered an apology to the mainland Chinese actor who has accused them of assaulting him the week before.

Tse and Cheng paid a half-hour visit to Wang Bozhao at the local hospital where he is receiving care. There, they reportedly passed on a "sincere apology" to the bruised mainland actor.

The attack took place in mid-September during filming of a fight scene for the mainland television production *Xiao Yu'er and Hua Wuque*. Apparently, Tse and Cheng took the scene too seriously and dealt Wang blows that left him with injuries to his legs, lips and teeth.

Xu Xiaoming, chairman of the Hong Kong Television Professionals Society, accompanied the two Hong Kong actors to the hospital.

Xu explained that he could not believe

news reports that the Hong Kong actors had deliberately beaten up a mainland actor until he came to Beijing to personally check on the case. "I immediately persuaded Tse and Cheung to come to hospital to apologize to Mr. Wang," he was quoted as saying by Sina.com last week.

At a press conference held by the producer of the television series on September 20, two officials from the production's studio said the incident was a "misunderstanding," while the two actors said they had hit Wang merely because they were "too deeply engrossed in their parts." They also refused to apologize for deliberately harming Wang. Even director Wang Jing spoke up two days later to play down the seriousness of the event.

Wang said he was glad his two assailants had apologized and he could feel they were at least somewhat sincere, but added he would not reverse his decision to take them to court. "I'm going to



Cheung (left) and Tse (right) apologized to the hospitalized Wang Bozhao on Sunday – Wang said he was suing them anyway.

sue them whether they apologize or not. It's a matter of principle," he said from his hospital bed, according to Sina.com.

After the incident, 36 prominent mainland directors and actors, including veteran actors Liu Xiaoqing and Zhang Fengyi and director Feng Xiaogang, signed a statement in support of Wang and called for the guilty parties to shoulder responsibility.

the real owner of the small fortune as quickly as possible.

The honest guys also called the police and handed over the money. Only then did they feel comfortable, they told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

So far, no one has come forward to claim the cash. The young men have said they are stepping back from the matter and simply want to get on with their normal lives.

Lucky Tenants Find Small Fortune Under Mattress



By Cheng Zheng

The fates smiled on four young men last Sunday when they discovered 130,000 yuan in cash stashed inside a bed in their newly-rented apartment in Zhongguancun, Haidian District.

The young tenants, Mao Qingsong, Jiang Tuanjie, Yang Wadong and Liu Yingao, all work for the same local company and decided to cut their living costs by sharing an apartment. The land-

lord provided an old bed and few other pieces of furniture, which the roommates quickly decided to get rid of and replace with better stuff.

But when they started trying to move the bed, a large paper-wrapped parcel hidden inside fell to the floor. Inside was a pile of 100 yuan notes – 1,300 of

In a show of remarkable honesty, the young men tried to track

down the owner of the money. First they attempted to contact the apartment's owner, but the agent through which they rented the flat told them the landlord had been abroad for years. They also checked with an upstairs neighbor to find who had occupied the apartment before, but did not learn anything.

Finally they decided to turn to the media and contacted *Beijing Youth Daily* to help them locate

By Zhaoxi Liu

A photograph on Chinadaily.com.cn shows heavy smoke billowing from a warehouse of a Chinese shoe shop; another, posted on Xinhuanet.com, depicts men throwing boxes into a huge fire consuming a pile of cargo containers in the street. Both blazes took place in Southeast Spain's shoe capital, Elche, where local Chinese shoe dealers' goods were set on fire.

The chaos began on September 16 when 16 cargo containers full of shoes belonging to Chen Jiusong, a Chinese businessman trading shoes on the China Shoe Market in Elche, were set ablaze by some 60 locals. Chen reported a loss of about 1 million euros, according to the Shanghai-based *Liberation Daily* September 23, and police arrested 10 suspects on the scene.

Before the violence, local residents said some anonymous pamphlets protesting cheap shoes from Asia were circulated in the region, some encouraging arson. On September 20, over 50 Chinese shoe businessmen – most of them from Wenzhou, East China's Zhejiang Province – brought in more than 50 vehicles to defend the China's Shoe Market.

Chinese Ambassador to Spain Qiu Xiaiqi said the incident was the first serious case of violence against Chinese businessmen in Spain.

Three days later, the situation escalated. On September 23, around 500 people demonstrated in the Carrus industrial zone at Elche, chanting "Chinese out." A warehouse was set on fire, culminating in losses of 800,000 euros (\$984,000), reported *China Daily* last Friday.

Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Shen Guofang beckoned the Spanish ambassador to come to China after the violent outbreak, urging the Spanish government to fully investigate the case and punish the arsonists. He also requested compensation for the losses suffered by Chinese businessmen and to guarantee the safety and property of Chinese people living in Spain. Spanish Ambassador Jose Pedro Sebastian de Erice condemned

Spanish police arrested 10 suspects on the scene. (right)

Men throw boxes into a huge fire consuming a pile of cargo containers. (down)



Chinese Shoe-burning in Spain Lights Up Controversy

the violence and said the Spanish government has promised to protect the integrity of Chinese nationals to avoid a repetition of such acts.

In the latest development, Ji Yihong, a Chinese lawyer who works in Elche representing suffered Chinese shoe businessmen, told the Beijing *Mirror* on Wednesday that he is planning to sue Spanish police for neglect of duty in an attempt to gain national compensation.

In the past two years, the number of Chinese shoe shops in Elche has mushroomed to over 60. An official from the Chinese Embassy surnamed Lin was quoted in *China Daily* last Fri-

day as saying that good quality and reasonable prices have made Chinese shoes very popular and have boosted the growth of Chinese shoe shops.

The incident has received much attention in Beijing.

Here's what the following people from various social circles told *Beijing Today* on the subject:

Zhang Lichun, Shoe-stand owner at Tianyu Market
This is outrageous

People who burned the shoes have to compensate. How could they do that? Chinese and local businessmen each do their own business. Spanish shoe dealers sell shoes of high quality at high

prices. This is their way of doing business. Chinese shoe dealers would like to sell shoes of a lesser quality but very cheap. This is up to Chinese businessmen, too. Every country should have its own standard of quality. So long as Chinese shoes match the standard, it's OK that Chinese businessmen sell shoes at lower prices. They need to occupy the market. Anyway, it's too extreme for the Spanish to burn Chinese shoes.

Li Li, Salesman at Ken Mai shoe store
Conflicts are understandable

Any Chinese would not feel good about hearing Chinese shoes

were burned in another country. Such action is not good, but, on the other hand, it is somehow understandable. Chinese shoes are so cheap that they cause an impact on local business. I learned from the news that many local shoe factories were closed because of the competition. Think about this, a local shoe factory that has been there for over 100 years now has to be driven out of business. The result is more unemployment. Chinese business has threatened the business – even the lives of the locals – then, of course, the locals would get mad and resist. So would Chinese people if a similar situation happened in China. This is the way that doing business is supposed to be.

Wang Qingyang, Customer manager at Hisun Wintech Electronic Ltd.
Such an incident is inevitable

The incident is not just by chance, but something inevitable. Even if such an incident did not happen in Spain, it might take place in some other places around the world. The rise of the Chinese economy definitely will cause an impact on developed countries. For example, exports

of Chinese people could take jobs in other countries, while exports of Chinese products could occupy the market. When vested interests of others are challenged, conflicts become inevitable.

Yu Xiongfei, Associated professor at the Center for China-EU Economy Cooperation Research University of International Business and Economics
Interests of Chinese businesses overseas need better protection

The incident could have some influence on middle and small businesses in China in terms of going abroad to do business. It may make them concerned that the investment environment overseas is not safe and that doing business abroad is too risky. More and more Chinese businesses of middle and small companies have gone overseas during recent years, but they have yet to organize themselves in a foreign country. Even though they don't have an organization, they can also join local professional organizations on their own, so that they can have the same responsibility as well as rights as local businessmen.

Also, Chinese businessmen working overseas should keep closer contact with the Chinese embassy in their living country instead of contacting the embassy only when they are in trouble. Without having such contact in mind in daily life, they might even not be able to find the telephone number of the embassy when they need it.

In supporting overseas investment, the Chinese government should not only pay attention to large companies, but also middle and small ones. For example, the government could establish or support some intermediary organizations to provide middle and small companies with consulting services in fields like language, local culture and local economy. Such services could help these businesses gain more information about a foreign place, make better decisions in their investments and lower their risks.

Wang Yong, Director of the Center for International Politics and Economics Studies, School of International Relations, Peking University
A win-win situation is the key to a solution

This incident demonstrates the impact of the Chinese economic force on foreign industries, especially those labour-intensive industries. How to resolve the conflict? For the Chinese government, it's important to further illuminate the benefits that cheap Chinese products bring to customers all around the world, and to improve the image of China on the international stage. For Chinese businessmen, they might want to consider manufacturing products in foreign countries and hiring local workers; they could also consider increasing the import of foreign products. Chinese businessmen working overseas are prudent in finance, but do not do enough to try to get involved in the local society. They might need to think about giving back to society, for example, not merely making money. They should try to make themselves good citizens, not "economic animals."

By Dong Nan

Earlier this September, the People's Procuratorate of Sichuan Province adopted a new measure to protect suspects' rights in 11 cities, including Chengdu, Guang'an and Miyan.

Suspects arrested by the procuratorate have the right to plead not guilty in writing five days of the date of their arrest and the procuratorate should then check the case again under the censorship of supervisors from the public. Should the supervisors find the suspects not guilty, they must be released.

According to The People's Procuratorate of Sichuan, suspects can plead not guilty if they believe that (1) they were not involved in the acts in question; (2) evidence is insufficient; (3) the acts are not in violation of the law.

Public supervision is a unique system in China. It was adopted by several provinces, including Southwest China's Sichuan, East China's Fujian and central Hubei last October, and will be carried out in the entire nation this year. It stipulates that people's procuratorates should invite laypeople with some law knowledge as freelance "supervisors from the people"; if there are any disputes concerning the work of the procuratorate, more than three supervisors from the people must investigate the case and hear the explanation from the case procurator. Should those supervisors disagree with the procurator, they can appeal to the superior procuratorate to decide the case.

Following this week's National Day holiday, Beijing procurators will also inherit the system.

The regulation in Sichuan was put into use recently. On August 26, Yang Lingbo, former vice-president of the Statistics Bureau of Yueche town, Guang'an, was arrested by the local people's procuratorate on bribery charges. Under the protection of the new regulation,

"Supervisors from the People" Debated by the People

he pleaded not guilty on August 27 claiming he was not involved in the activities, which were deemed unlawful by the local procuratorate.

On September 7, five local supervisors from the people investigated Yang's case by reviewing materials provided by the procuratorate and hearing the procurator's introduction. They decided that Yang's plea was not applicable and that the decision should stand.

However, this regulation has aroused public debate. Those who agree with the policy think it protects the rights of the suspects, while opponents find it "unfair" and dispute the regulation's effectiveness. Others have expressed their opinions against the system itself regarding the participation of supervisors from the public.

Xing Xiaobing, director of the supervision department, The People's Procuratorate, Haidian District, Beijing
Positive effects

I think the regulation from the People's Procuratorate and the system of supervisors from the people have positive effects.

The regulation of Sichuan gives suspects a right of "disobedience of arrest." It is a protection for the human rights of suspects and can help ensure the fairness of judicature. Personally, I consider it a significant improvement in the procuratorate system.

Though the system of supervisors from the people would add to the workload of procurators, however, it puts them under the supervision of not only official organizations but also the public,

and gives them a chance to hear opinions from others.

However, I think that as to Sichuan's case, the course of supervision should be brought forward – supervisors from the people can be involved not only until suspects plead not guilty, but also as soon as the procuratorate begins investigating cases. And those supervisors should pay more attention to whether investigating and arresting is fair.

Liu Xiaoyu, lawyer, Beijing Due Bound Law Offices
Practical effects are doubtful

I think it's hard to say whether the regulation is good or bad. Apparently, it protects the human rights of suspects and is an improvement, but whether it has practical effects is still doubtful.

For example, if the suspect says evidence is not enough to prove his or her guilt, can those supervisors from the people have enough knowledge of law or time to make a decision about whether the suspect's words stand, or find enough evidence to prove the guilt of the suspect? If they can't, the regulation would be a waste of time and resources.

Chen Kegong, lawyer, Beijing Yixin Law Offices
The regulation is constitutionally groundless

The procuratorate's rights to supervise governmental departments and arrested suspects are granted by the constitution of the State, however, the system of supervisor from the people is but a regulation. How can a regulation disturb a right granted by the constitution? It is groundless constitutionally.

Besides, the law has already given suspects the right to plead not guilty. Clause 93 of the Litigant Law says that the procuratorate should inquire the suspect, and the suspect is able to guard himself or herself. This is the suspect's right in pleading and a protection of their human rights. Therefore, I think the regulation of Sichuan is something like gilding lily.

Li Kejie, professor of law, Shandong Province
The regulation should be adopted in cases investigated by police

Basically, I think this regulation is an improvement. Facing the great power of State mechanism, suspects as individuals are in an unfavourable situation essentially, and their rights should be protected carefully.

In practice, there are many cases with disputes, but procurators are intended to keep suspects arrested until cases are sentenced, not to mention adopting their faults in the course of investigating cases. This is a violation of people's freedoms, in fact. And this regulation can prevent that from happening.

However, I think this regulation is far from enough since it only is adopted in cases investigated by procuratorates, not those by police. I think it should be adopted in cases investigated by the police, as well. Most cases investigated by procuratorates are involved with officials who would be prosecuted for dereliction of duty, abusing power, bribery, and so on. If we only allow them to have the right to plead not guilty after being arrested, it

seems unfair and might arouse a new possibility of corruption.

He Xiangdong, judge, Henan Province
Not necessary to be within 'five days' and 'in written form'

I think this regulation is a protection of rights of suspects. However, according to the Litigant Law, procuratorates should set suspects free as long as they find the arrest wrongful at any time. It also means that suspects can plead not guilty at any time after they are arrested and before they are sentenced, not only within "five days." Besides, I don't understand why it regulates that the plea should be "in written form." It might seem more formal and serious, but why can't an oral plea make sense?

Anonymous supervisor from the people and teacher at Zhongnan University, Wuhan Province
The system of supervisors from the people must be improved

I think the regulation in Sichuan is an improvement. However, I have something to say about the system of supervisors from the people. I think one of the biggest problems of it is that all the supervisors are retained by procuratorates themselves and their identifications are released by procuratorates as well. I think the independence of those supervisors must be influenced.

Besides, though it was regulated that the fee for retaining supervisors should be afforded by the local government, practically, it always falls on the heads of procuratorates. According to my experience, every time I went to the local procuratorate to "supervise," staff there would give me 100 yuan as payment. I think it is unadvisable.

In all, without a mature system of supervisors from the people, I don't think the regulation can go too far.

What's the Deal with Pricey Moon Cakes?

By Dong Nan

How much would you pay for lard, flour and sugar in a fancy box?

It is a well-known tradition for Chinese to eat and send moon cakes during the Mid-autumn Festival. However, in recent years, moon cakes have become more and more expensive - some costing thousands of yuan.

A survey by *Beijing Youth Daily* that involved more than 600 people from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, shows that although about 60% of the people buy moon cakes every Mid-autumn Festival, only 20% said they would buy over-priced moon cakes, while most said they would not buy them even if they had the money.

According to 56.9% of the respondents, moon cakes costing 100 yuan per box are too expensive; about 30% said 500-yuan cakes are too pricey; and only 2% said they would dish out 1,000 yuan per box.

"Various bonuses"

In 2000, most moon cakes in the country cost 200 yuan per box. According to Zhou, an employee at a moon-cake factory in Beijing, the cost of a quality moon cake is less than 10 yuan a piece (most cost around five yuan), and a whole box should set you back no more than 100 yuan.

So, what exactly do these special little boxes contain?

According to a report from *Beijing Youth Daily*, there is a kind of moon cake in Kunming, capital of Southwest China's Yunnan Province, with a price tag of 310,000 yuan per box, which contains less than 10 cakes; it's the various added "bonuses" that add up - an Olympus digital camera, a bottle of wine, a Parker's pen, a Zippo lighter and high-quality teas. The real winner, though, is the box with a key to a 114-square-meter house worth 300,000 yuan.

A hotel in Nankai District, Northeast China's Tianjin municipality, sold a series of moon cakes called the "Supreme Full Moon of Gold," for 99,999 yuan. One of these eight moon cakes, which comes in a rosewood box is made of pure gold, weighing 500 grams. The package also includes a gold necklace and a gold-plated Chinese chess set.

In a supermarket in Nanning of South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, a Xinhua

reporter came across a box of moon cakes at 2,988 yuan with just one cake weighing 400 grams and a bonus golden kylin (traditional Chinese animal symbolizing luck and peace) adorned with man-made diamonds.

The best-selling box of cakes for 999 yuan in Juxiangyuan, a high-ranking cake shop at the Nanjing Jinying Shopping Centre, consists of eight moon cakes and such bonuses as a set of delicate knives and forks, and a bottle of Cognac XO. The shopping centre also offers other specials: the "Gold and Fortune" at 1,688 yuan per box, with four little cakes and a crystal sculpture with the word "fortune" on it, and "Rongcheng Prime Time" at 1,088 yuan per box with four small cakes tucked into the corners of a beautiful brass box with a bottle of Cognac XO in the center worth 800 yuan.

"The pure profits for selling moon cakes is limited," said Zhou, "But with those bonuses and extravagant packages, the profits are much higher. This is why producers take so many efforts in making those over-expensive moon cakes."

"Nursery for bribery"

"Most of those over-priced moon cakes are bought for the use of 'public relations' or as gifts for superior officials," said a salesman in Juxiangyuan, adding: "How can common people afford those costly ones?"

According to the survey by *Beijing Youth Daily*, most people (97%) thought the pricey cakes would serve as gifts rather than be enjoyed by the buyers themselves. Among them, 80% thought they were intended for "people who would benefit the buyer," and only 17% said they might be gifts for the elderly.

"I would buy some expensive moon cakes to send to my clients," said Xu Guocun, president of Wangda Transportation Company in Nanjing. "After receiving those expensive gifts, they would feel happy and know my sincerity, and a future cooperation would be more smooth. Personally, I don't like that. But how can I avoid it? Every businessman sends expensive gifts to his clients."

More than 38% of total respondents and more than 70% of Shanghainese claimed that posh moon cakes had already become "a method of bribery."

"It is really hard to manage



In a Nanjing shopping centre there is a kind of moon cake sold for 1,000 yuan, that comes in a rosewood box and includes a bottle of Cognac XO.

Photo by Photocom

those expensive moon cakes though people are clear that many of them must be used as bribery," said Zhai Xuewei, a sociologist at Nanjing University.

"Business administration departments would not manage them since they don't involve unfair competition; qualification supervision departments wouldn't be concerned with them because they don't have problems of quality; consumer associations would not ask since they don't violate the interests of consumers. As for principle supervision departments for officials - it is a traditional courtesy to send moon cakes during the Mid-autumn

Festival, and as long as both sides don't say, who knows what's in the boxes?"

"If moon cakes are sent to officials or managers of State-owned enterprises, it is the same as sending money or other expenditures, and the essence is, of course, a kind of bribery," said Fan Ping, a researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. "And it is reasonable for common people to doubt that expensive moon cakes are a kind of nursery for bribery since such bribery under various disguises always happens nowadays."



Moon cakes seem be outnumbered by special "bonuses".

And, according to Ren Jianming, vice professor of the Public Management Department of Tsinghua University in Beijing: "In China, since the course of using public power and the distribution of public recourse is not quite open and transparent, to have a relation with somebody with power is still very important to many people and expensive moon cakes are there to meet people's needs to develop this kind of relationship."

Tremendous waste

According to statistics from the Chinese Baking Food Industry Association, the packaging fees - 2.5 billion yuan - account for one-third of the total cost of making moon cakes every year.

Another survey by the Forestry Ministry of China found that every 10 million boxes of moon cakes use 400-600 trees for packaging. To aggravate the situation, materials such as iron, plastic, paper, glass, and even silk and satin are not recycled.

This Mid-autumn Festival, many environmental-protection associations in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have organized recycling drives involving more than 1.5 million Hong Kongers.

However, according to the survey by *Beijing Youth Daily*, only 18.5% of the respondents

said they knew of similar recycling initiatives in their own cities (25% in Beijing, 15% in Shanghai and 14% in Guangzhou).

A blow to Chinese culture

Traditionally, the Mid-autumn Festival was a time for the whole family to get together to watch the full moon. However, in many people's eyes, commercialism has distorted the special event.

"I understand that cake producers try to pursue higher profits by making expensive moon cakes," said Wu Bing'an, a 76-year-old expert on folklore, "But it is damaging to traditional culture. What is the essence of the Mid-autumn Festival? It is the deep feeling among family members. It is the most plain and warmest traditional festival in China. And the moon cake is a kind of food that belongs to the common people. But those expensive moon cakes advocating unhealthy extravagance have become a method of bribery sometimes. It is a humiliation to our culture."

"Christmas is a traditional festival in western countries, and many businessmen surely seek chances to make more money," added Wu, "but I never heard of any producers putting gold and diamonds or keys to houses into Santa Claus."

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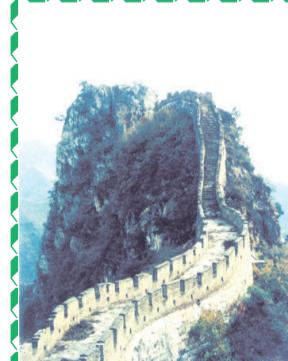
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By Peng Juan

One elderly lady stands out at the forefront of China's struggle against HIV/AIDS. But with her heavy glasses and hobbling gait, Gao Yaojie looks like an unlikely activist.

The small-framed 77-year-old retired gynecologist from Central China's Henan Province, known as "Sister Theresa in China," says she is never afraid – not of the local corrupt officials who have tried to keep her quiet; not of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), the deadly disease that has ravaged much of Henan; and certainly not of old age.

It is the memory of a child clutching his dead mother and countless other tragedies across Henan that made Gao China's most outspoken AIDS campaigner.

Sounding the alarm

Gao's crusade against AIDS began in 1996 after she had retired from the Henan College of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

"In 1996, a female patient named Ba was admitted to a hospital in Zhengzhou," recalls Gao. "No confirmed diagnosis was made for 16 days and the doctors came to me for consultation on the mysterious case. An HIV test finally confirmed she was HIV-positive. She died a few days later at the age of 42."

Ba was Gao's first AIDS patient. More than a year earlier, she was given a transfusion with contaminated blood during an operation on a uterine tumor.

Gao was astonished to find that the contaminated blood had come from a blood bank. Knowing that the spread of the HIV virus through the blood supply could spell disaster, Gao sounded the alarm.

"I heard that after Ba died, her husband slept before her tomb for over 10 days," says Gao, her eyes swelling up with tears. "He regretted bitterly that he had asked for a blood transfusion for his wife. How many innocent lives will the pitiless demon (AIDS) sweep away?"

Gao embarked on her arduous and lonely journey of AIDS prevention since then.

Uncovering a hidden epidemic

In 1996, Gao began writing and publishing AIDS-awareness materials at her own expense. Despite serious financial constraints, Gao and her helpers managed to disseminate 12,000 pamphlets at railroad stations and clinics.

A year later, having learned that HIV/AIDS was also seriously affecting rural areas, Gao expanded her initiatives. She began to investigate AIDS in Henan's crowded villages, recording medical histories, documenting them with photographs, and answering letters and telephone calls. In doing this, she uncovered a hidden epidemic. In Wenlou village alone, 65 percent of the villagers were HIV-positive.

Gao learned that the rampant spread of HIV/AIDS is a result of the wanton and unregulated buying and selling of blood. Blood donors contract the virus not only due to contaminated needles but also because donated blood is often pooled. After the desired elements in the blood are isolated, the remainder is divided and returned to the donor. So, blood-borne diseases spread rapidly among the blood pushers, who later pass on the AIDS virus to their spouses and children, as well as to patients who get blood transfusions.

This situation is also abetted by ignorance on the part of the poor and greed among local officials, blood traders, blood banks and pharmaceutical companies.

Gao travelled extensively around Henan bringing comfort and educational pamphlets to villages whose inhabitants did not even know the name of the disease.



Gao distributes pamphlets to local residents.

Photos by Imaginechina

A Chinese Mother Theresa



"I went through a lot of hardships. That's why I help others. I feel sorry for them."

read HIV educational materials. Therefore, Gao's efforts were often accompanied by scornful looks and terse replies.

"I still remember when I went to a nightclub to give AIDS prevention materials to the bar girls there. The women hid themselves as if a terrible monster had come in. Some of the braver women took a look at the materials but when they saw it was about AIDS, they threw them into the trash can yelling, 'Old lady, get out of here!'"

Before Gao was kicked out of the club by the manager, she was told that such material would surely scare off customers who would believe the staff was infected with HIV or AIDS.

"This happens quite often," continues Gao. "If it isn't an entertainment spot, it's in a government office, a factory or a business. There are few exceptions."

Over the last few years Gao has attempted to incorporate AIDS information with gynecological publications.

"This method seems more effective and has not met resistance. But printing costs are high and I can't afford to do it on my own."

Gao the Brave

"The only way to solve the AIDS problem is to be practical. AIDS is a normal illness, and AIDS patients are normal people, too," Gao says.

She has handed out medicine to control the diarrhea associated with AIDS and cuddled infected infants to show neighbors that there was nothing to fear.

With help from volunteers, Gao has tried to implicate new strategies to disseminate HIV information, via grassroots health workers, family-planning clinics, women's groups, families of AIDS patients, at bus stations or on trains, as well as through newspapers and magazines.



Gao's home "command center" is packed with anti-HIV/AIDS leaflets.



Gao investigates the situation affecting AIDS orphans in a local village.

She has also informed the local, national and international media. HIV/AIDS has now become a standard topic in Gao's lectures for students and the general public.

The press has also begun exposing Henan's AIDS crisis in China and abroad, and the central government has attached more importance to the issue by unveiling a nationwide campaign to crack down on illegal blood collection across China.

Today, more and more people are asking for information and seeking advice.

"I know my efforts are just a drop in the ocean, but I am convinced I can inspire others to get actively involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS," says Gao.

Hugging orphans

According to Gao, orphans are the ones who suffer most from the disease.

Gao sent a total 80,000 yuan to help more than 160 AIDS orphans over the past three years. "Twenty thousand yuan came out of my own pocket," she says, adding, "I raised another 20,000 yuan from my medical practice."

But Gao soon found out that sending money to AIDS orphans did not always

produce the best results since some relatives stole the money and put it towards other uses. As a result, Gao was forced to change her tactics.

She believes that the best hope of giving the kids a chance at a decent life is to find them good foster homes. But, as a doctor, Gao also has her own principles: Before bringing any child into a new family, she performs an AIDS test to ensure that the adoptee is healthy.

Family-interest conflicts

Since taking up her campaign, Gao has transformed the unheated flat she shares with her husband into a "command center."

Both Gao and her husband are retired doctors. Over the past eight years Gao has spent hundreds of thousands of yuan on her campaign.

She edited and printed leaflets twice a year that cost her between 3,000-5,000 yuan per run, earning the extra money mostly by juggling both teaching classes and writing articles.

"I only spend about 200 yuan per month, as I don't drink milk or any soft drinks – and I don't buy any snack food for myself," she adds. My daughter-in-law buys me new clothes and always complains that I'm not well dressed."

Gao sent a total of 80,000 yuan to help more than 160 AIDS orphans over the past three years. "Twenty thousand yuan came out of my own pocket," she says, adding, "I raised another 20,000 yuan from my medical practice. The rest of the money came from public donations."

To continue with her campaign, Gao must keep her family-spending budget at a minimum.

"Once I won an international human rights award and got a prize of \$30,000. My grandson came to me and said, 'Grandma, let's buy a car.' But I told him the money would be better spent on other things." Gao printed 30,000 AIDS awareness booklets and 500,000 copies of her newsletter with the proceeds.

Gao's devotion to helping AIDS victims has spilled into her own family life. One Chinese Lunar New Year when she brought several AIDS orphans to her family for the holidays, her son refused to celebrate the holidays with them.

Gao also had little time for her own children when they were growing up. She was too busy to wash our clothes or make us a meal, recall her son and two daughters, with some resentment. Gao's husband, Guo Mingjiu, brought up his children single-handedly, and does all the chores by himself even now at 80 years of age.

"Once I asked my wife why we should do all this. Isn't it better that we simply stay at home and spend our retirement quietly?" Mingjiu told *Beijing Today*. "She told me that, as doctors, we couldn't just watch people die and not lend a helping hand."

Fighting to her last day

Some people attribute Gao's resolve to take on AIDS to her stubborn character traits. But her fight against AIDS has definitely gone beyond her stubbornness.

"I went through a lot of hardships. That's why I help others. I feel sorry for them," Gao says.

Her efforts have helped to finally bring the AIDS scandal into the public sphere.

Gao is the winner of the 2001 Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights, and the 2003 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service. In early 2003, China Central Television honoured Gao as one of the 10 recipients of the prestigious "Touching China" award.

The Chinese government has now started to confront the disease with the intensity it requires. With the new national committee set up to combat AIDS, Gao is no longer an isolated voice struggling to be heard. A law allowing people to adopt AIDS orphans is now also under way, which, Gao says, is a breakthrough that "vindicates her strategy."

With the release of her new book *Ten Thousand Letters* nationwide, the senior doctor is setting her sights on her next task - which is *not* retirement.

"I will do this until the day I die," she vows.

By Zhao Pu

While the world's top athletes flocked to Athens this summer, Spain's Barcelona was hosting a different kind of Olympics – a five-month cultural and intellectual forum on solving the world's problems.

Last Sunday's closing ceremony consisted of a folk festival with a large pyrotechnic show in celebration of the values of the Universal Forum of Cultures – Barcelona 2004, which started May 9 and ran through to September 26. An audience of 40,000 was present at the Forum Site for the show.

2004: Year of Barcelona

2004 was again the year of Barcelona. Since the Olympic Games in 1992, the city has not witnessed an event of the magnitude of the Forum, which saw more than 7.5 million visitors converging on this Mediterra-



Exhibition: Inhabiting the World

Barcelona Stages First Cultural Olympics

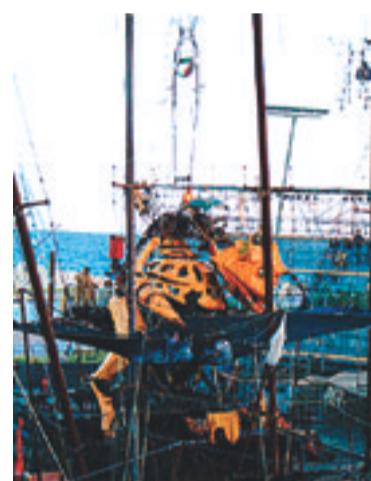
nean and former Olympic city.

Part festival, part meeting-of-minds on broad themes, the 141-day Forum Barcelona 2004 was an international festive journey designed to promote three core themes of life: cultural diversity, sustainable development and conditions for peace.

Promoted by former President of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch and Joan Clos, mayor of Barcelona and president of the Forum, this UNESCO-supported major international event proposes to be similar in spirit and scale to the Olympic Games, but based on world cultures, rather than sport.

The city and regional governments and private investors spent billions transforming Barcelona's northern shore specially for the forum – a 125-acre site situated between Barcelona's Poble Nou District and neighboring Sant Adrià de Besòs, near the mouth of the Besòs River and at the end of the Avinguda Diagonal. The site features a large new port, a public plaza that organizers say is southern Europe's largest conference center. There is also a new beach, a park and a striking triangular building designed by Swiss architects Herzog and De Meuron.

Over the 141 days of the Forum, 50 large and small scale exhibitions, 49 "dialogues," 56 con-



Performance: Titan of the Seven Seas

Photo by Zhao Pu

fairs, puppet shows, monologues, theater and firework displays, from concerts by performers including Bob Dylan, Norah Jones, BB King and Sting, to speeches by guests such as former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and Brazilian President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva.

The Forum's website (www.barcelona2004.org) registered nearly 56 million hits over the four and a half months. With regard to the languages used by visitors, 54 percent were Spanish speakers, 37 percent Catalan and 9 percent English. Over 108,000 people followed the Forum Dialogues on-line, almost 30 percent of whom were from outside Spain.

It's like a "cultural Olympics," Forum spokesman Oleguer Sarsenadas told *Beijing Today*. "The Forum is an international event on par with the Olympics, only we're bringing together individuals, not countries."

Four thematic exhibitions

The Forum's main themes were illustrated in four extraordinary thematic exhibitions: *Voices*, *Inhabiting the World*, *Cities-Corners* and *Warriors of Xi'an* showed 2,000-year-old terracotta warriors from the tomb of Emperor Qin Shihuang in Xi'an.

Voices, at the Barcelona International Convention Center, was dedicated to diversity, one of the core themes of the Forum by cel-



Exhibition: Voice

brating human communication and linguistic and cultural diversity, revealing the richness of human communication as both an expression of cultural diversity and a bridge for dialogue.

The theme of *Inhabiting the World*, exhibited at the Balcony Wharf, was dealt with on three different scales – region, city and habitat. Within the wider context of sustainability, it examined relationships between human beings and space, proposing sustainable ideas for reducing the socio-environmental problems of the planet.

The *Cities-Corners* exhibition at the Convention Center, offered a reflection on cities, focusing on one of their most symbolic elements: the corner, which is understood as the ul-

timate meeting point and intersection. As Joan Clos, mayor of Barcelona and president of the Forum, stated on the forum website, the exhibition is an "intellectual provocation" to encourage reflection on the role of the city, starting from the corner as a leitmotiv. "There are no precedents for an exhibition of this kind, with a reflection like this on the urban situation."

The *Warriors of Xi'an*, exhibited at the Park Wharf, brought to Barcelona one of the most important exhibitions of Chinese funerary art ever to be held in Europe. Along with the *Confucius Culture Exhibition* at the Caesar Fund Exhibition Hall, and the *Bronze Art Exhibition* from the Shanghai Museum, at the Catalonian National Art Gallery, it became one of the highlights of the Forum.

Oriental gems

One of the Forum's most highly anticipated cultural exhibits and one of the four extraordinary thematic exhibitions, it was the only one with a "tailored" separate opening ceremony at which Mayor Joan Clos, Chinese vice cultural minister and head of Chinese cultural delegation to Barcelona Zheng Xinmiao were present.

The 140 pieces on show were from the Qin (221-207 BC) and Han (202 BC-220 AD) dynasties, representing the formation and

consolidation periods of the Chinese Empire. The most spectacular of the Qin Dynasty pieces were a selection of 20 life-size, terracotta warriors, including the figures of a general, an archer and an acrobat, as well as suit of stone armor made from 612 pieces connected by metal thread.

The *Warriors of Xi'an* exhibition represented a first for both Barcelona and China. It is the first time such a large quantity of terracotta warriors and horses – all top level cultural relics – have been exhibited outside China.

Special plumbing was installed outside the exhibition hall to maintain appropriate humidity and temperature by spraying water every three minutes. After the Forum closes, the terracotta warriors will go on show in Madrid before returning to their home.

China was also represented by various art troupes and delegations, such as the Guangdong Puppet Troupe, for the dialogues and seminars, and special children's summer camps organized for the event. Chinese artists also participated in the opening ceremony and acrobats from Guangdong were among some 20 performers from various countries who participated in the *Titan of the Seven Seas* performance, which was staged 423 times over the course of the forum.

2007 in Monterrey

At Sunday's closing ceremony, the Mexican city of Monterrey – venue for the 2007 Universal Forum of Cultures – received the torch from Barcelona. Sari Bermúdez, on behalf of President Vicente Fox of Mexico, announced, "See you again in 2007."

Fukuoka, Japan, is competing with South Korea's Suwon to host the third Universal Forum of Cultures in 2011.

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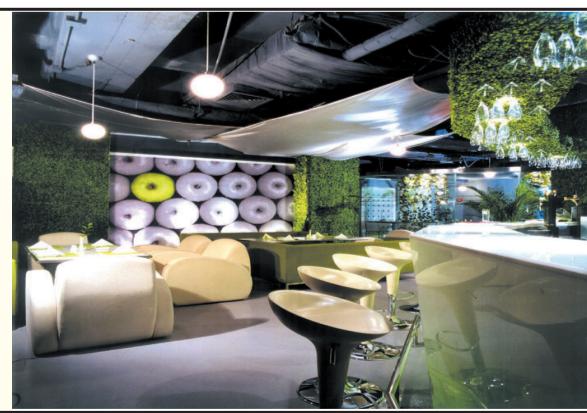
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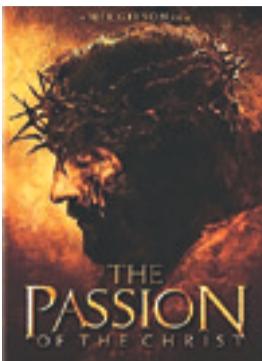
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What's on DVD

By Wang Yue

The Passion of the Christ



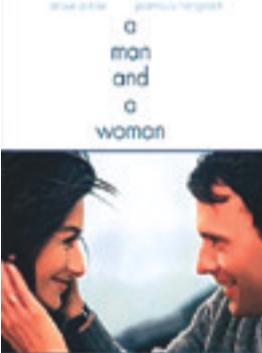
Mel Gibson's controversial film about the final hours of Jesus Christ is not exactly light viewing. It contains some very powerful moments, and boasts some strong performances, all of which are overshadowed by the ultra-realistic and unrelenting violence. Aramaic with Chinese and English subtitles. DVD 9

Mean Girls



An unremarkable comedy that did remarkably well at the box office this summer. Cady Heron (Lindsay Lohan) is a hit with The Plastics, the A-list girl clique at her new school, until she makes the mistake of falling for Aaron Samuels (Jonathan Bennett), the ex-boyfriend of alpha Plastic Regina George (Rachel McAdams). English with English and Chinese subtitles. DVD 5

A Man and A Woman



This 1966 film catapulted French director Claude Lelouch to international fame, winning Academy Awards for best foreign film and best screenplay. It explores the slowly evolving relationship between a man and a woman who meet each other by chance at their children's school. French and English with Chinese subtitles. DVD 5

As a special treat for their



A Feast of Chekhov

By Jacqueline Yu

The National Theatre Company of China's first International Festival of Theater closes this weekend, bringing to an end what has been for Beijing audiences a feast of Chekhov.

Bringing down the curtain on the festival is, appropriately, Lin Zhaohua's production of *The Cherry Orchard*, at North Theatre in Beibingnasi, which ends its run Sunday. Director Lin Zhaohua has long been a darling of the avant-garde theater scene in Beijing. Using Tong Daoming's translated script, his *Cherry Orchard* is bursting with amateur actors, cherry trees and sand.

The set is a big project for North Theatre. Designer Yi Liming uses scaffolding to raise the stage to the height of the second floor, so the audience are all packed up in the rarely used second floor balcony. An iron plate forms the floor, on which earth and sand are spread to create the effect of a real cherry orchard. On the surrounding "land," stand six cherry trees with no leaves. Above is a low cloth roof, which

creates the impression of a thick, light-brown cloud hovering overhead. On the sides are plastic walls, from behind which the actors can enter the stage.

Film star Jiang Wenli leads the performance as Madame Ranevsky. Surrounding her are many faces familiar to those who have been attending this summer's University Students' Theater Festival. Yuan Hong, the manager of North Theatre and a strong supporter of student drama, told *Beijing Today*, "Yes, the actors come from everywhere, including university drama societies and some private groups."

Compared with the Russian National Youth Theatre's realistic production of the same play at Tianqiao Theatre a week ago, Lin's production pursues an abstract expression for this century-old story. The actors all wear modern dress and speak their lines casually — perhaps partly because most have received no professional training.

The production was in marked contrast to Toronto-based Theatre Smith-Gilmour's *Chekhov's Shorts*. Combining four stories by Chekhov nested

within the framework of a fifth, *Chekhov Shorts* is performed by four actors, each of whom play the central character of one story: Michele Smith is Belikov, the *Man in a Shell*; Patricia Marceau plays a young maid tormented by lack of sleep in *Sleepyhead*; Liisa Repo-Martell is a lost dog who joins the circus in *Kashtanka*; while in *Rothschild's Fiddle*, Dean Gilmour, who cofounded the group with Smith in 1980, is a coffin-maker who worries about orphaning his fiddle.

It seems that no role is too difficult for the four actors, be it animal, vegetable or mineral. When not playing a human role, they might be acting the part of a duck, a goose, or perhaps a tree. The Canadian actors' brilliant physical movement, imagination and virtuosity captivated the audience for the entire show. The almost empty stage, with only a few trunks serving as props, further strengthened the visual impact of the small group.

When the final curtain fell, it was "Bravo!" for the actors, "Bravo!" for theater, and of course "Bravo!" for Chekhov.

Photo by Li Yan

Backstreet Boys Get Back

By Zhang Jianzhong

Just one month after pop diva Whitney Houston thrilled Beijing music fans with her live concert, Backstreet Boys appeared on stage on their first ever tour of China.

Amidst girls (and a few boys) chanting "B-S-B, B-S-B" the Boys materialized on stage and launched into *The Call*. They continued with *As Long As You Love Me*, *Show Me The Meaning of Being Lonely*, *I Want It In That Way*, *The One* and more.

As a special treat for their



Chinese fans — five brand new songs — *Climbing The Wall*, *Shout*, *Beautiful Women*, *Poster Girl* and *All I Have To Give* were also showcased.

The set closed with *Backstreet's Back*, and then they were gone, with no encore to the enduring disappointment of a few fans who genuinely seemed to want one.

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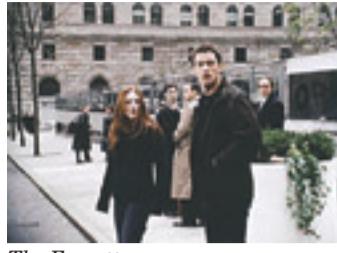
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The Forgotten

so many starts and stops, but it's a really funny movie, and I can't wait to get it done so everyone can see it." (Reuters)

Kevin Costner Weds

Hollywood star Kevin Costner has married his 30-year-old German girlfriend at his ranch in the US state of Colorado.

A Roman Catholic priest led the ceremony last Saturday, wedding blonde handbag designer Christine Baumgaertner to the 49-year-old Oscar winner, *Bild am Sonntag* reported Sunday.



More than 500 guests were invited to the wedding party, which was held under the theme "country" and was set to run for four days. Costner divorced his first wife, with whom he had three children, in 1994. (AP)

Queen Latifah Gets a Little Jazzier

Queen Latifah is getting a little jazzier. Five albums and 15 years after her hard-hitting hip-hop debut *All Hail the Queen*, Queen Latifah is poised to release the jazz-obsessed *The Dana Owens Album* in which she sings standards.

"This is definitely not a one-shot deal," the singer, whose real name is Dana Owens, told Sunday's *Denver Post*. "Hopefully, with the success of it, I'll be in it till I'm dead. I've always looked at singing as something I can do forever."



Hilton Dodges Hurricane

Florida's string of disaster-causing hurricanes continued over the weekend, with Hurricane Jeanne wreaking havoc on the East Coast, and for a second time Paris Hilton found herself caught in the middle.

The ubiquitous heiress is down South filming her biggest screen role to date in *National Lampoon's Pledge This!* But because of the latest round of nasty weather, she had to flee the South Beach set again, this time in favor of Orlando.

"We are getting ready to evacuate right now," Hilton told the *Hollywood Reporter* on Friday in between takes. "It's been hard to shoot with



It was her experience in the 1998 feature film *Living Out Loud*, co-starring alongside Holly Hunter and Danny DeVito, that led to her new album. *The Dana Owens Album* is out this week. (AP)

Edited by Chen Si

Making It in Media

By Xie Lixue

The world has developed an insatiable thirst for images and words in this "information age", and China is certainly no different. The media is not only an exploding industry in this country, it is a source of highly-sought-after, challenging new jobs in China's increasingly competitive work market.

The chances to reach out to millions, to break an interesting story, or simply to earn a good salary in a stimulating environment are main factors attracting unprecedented numbers of people to the media industry. But aspiring media moguls should keep in mind that reaching the very top of the field requires experience and many skills, and a career in the media is not all fun and games.

State of the art

Investment in advertising in different kinds of news media surpassed 100 billion yuan in China in the first half of this year, skyrocketing 35 percent from the same period of 2003, according to figures from the CTR



Market Research Company, a joint venture between China International Television Corporation and London-based market information firm Taylor Nelson Sofres.

With that kind of cash flowing in, many media outlets have the money to offer employees attractive compensation packages. Reporters and editors with three years experience or more at newspapers or periodicals can earn over 5,000 yuan a month, and the salaries of high-profile journalists and columnists can easily pass the 100,000 yuan per year mark.

TV stations tend to offer similar pay, giving newcomers 3,000 to 4,000 yuan a month and senior staff 8,000 to 10,000 yuan per month.

Getting to the top

Nowadays, talented professionals no longer hail only from recognizable broadcasting or journalism schools -- many people are entering the field after graduating from schools of communication at universities or professional colleges, where education tends to be more

job market-oriented.

"The most desired employees have mastered both theoretical and practical skills," Wang Yiming, manager of Enorth.com.cn, was quoted as saying by the *Jiangnan Shiba* newspaper on Sunday. "Many students have solid theoretical backgrounds, since that is the focus of training at most schools, but their professional abilities are therefore relatively weak."

However, that is likely to change in the near future, however, as more universities make journalism a key field of education in response to the media industry's explosive growth.

What does it take to enter the top ranks of media professionals? Zhang Yanping, president of *Beijing Youth Daily*, named three key traits at a summit on journalism education not too long ago.

First and foremost are being active and knowledgeable, according to Zhang. Second is being able to cope with the demands of the market and being able to work with and coordinate employ-

ees. Last, and not least is understanding business operations.

Health risks

The downside to a career in the media is the heavy toll it can take on the body, mostly a result of work stress that can shoot off the scale.

The death of Beijing TV station sports reporter Zheng Li of a heart attack at the Athens Olympics shone much-needed attention to the health risks of professionals in this deadline-driven, competitive industry.

The demands of providing the very latest breaking news forces employees at newspapers and television and radio stations to often work well into the night, and their generally irregular sleep, eating, work and leisure schedules can take heavy tolls on their bodies.

Lin Guifang, former president of the Jiangsu People's Hospital, recommended to media professionals at the Saturday seminar that they adjust their lives to become more stable and healthy by finding time for regular exercise, eating better and staying well rested.

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Corporate HR

Get that Warm, Fizzy Feeling at Coca-Cola

By Xie Lixue

Skills for handling communication, both within the company and without, are among the first things that Coca-Cola looks for in new employees, Pei Yajie, human resources manager at Coca-Cola Beijing Co. told *Beijing Today* on Monday. Through email, Pei shared information on different aspects of her company's management concepts, recruitment policies and training systems.

BT: What is the most important management concept at Coca-Cola Beijing?

Pei Yajie: Our core values are passion, enthusiasm, quality and service.

Work experience has shown that many problems arise because of lapses in communication. Therefore, increasing communica-

cation between people has become our goal, with the aim of creating more comfortable and energizing working conditions.

To that end, we conduct activities called "happy communication" on Fridays. We get our people to talk about topics such as: "Which is better, being a boss or being an employee?" and "What makes a good communicator?" Through such questions, employees can learn to change their points of view, think from other people's perspectives and learn new things.

BT: What kinds of things do you look for during recruiting?

Pei: We carefully consider candidates' competencies and personalities when we recruit. Applicants' education backgrounds may differ, so it is essential to judge whether

their values comply with our corporate culture.

Generally, I introduce applicants to what they would need to do in their positions and some ways in which we operate differently from other companies. I also give them suggestions on what to do to fit into our company, which may go against what they expect.

BT: Please introduce the training and development opportunities offered to Coca-Cola employees.

Pei: We put great emphasis on the development of our human resources, part of our people-oriented culture. All employees have their individual development needs analyzed by professional HR staff as part of setting the development plan of the company.

When job vacancies arise, we tend to start recruitment inside the company, giving employees opportunities to change their work content and find positions best suited to them.

Moreover, our policy of having people rotate positions allows employees to widen their views and experiences and therefore improve their professional abilities.

A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.

Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.

Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred.

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Pei Yajie

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New universities opened this year:

Graz University of Medical Sciences (former medical college of University of Graz), Innsbruck University of Medical Sciences (former medical college of University of Innsbruck), and Vienna University of Medical Sciences (former medical college of University of Vienna).

There are also many universities of applied sciences and private universities in Austria. For a detailed list, check:

www.oead.ac.at
(Edited By Zhang Nan)

Tough overlooked by many young Chinese, Austria is an excellent place for international students to continue their educations.

Long known for its wine, music and pastry, Austria deserves much credit for its education system and quality of life, currently ranked fifth in the world. Higher education, while as of this month no longer free, is of very high quality, and Austrian universities offer recognized degrees in a wide range of fields, academic and professional, from hotel management to music and design.

Monday afternoon, Evelyn Woell-Zhang, who is in charge of press affairs and education consulting at the Austrian Embassy in Beijing, took part in the Study Abroad Salon along with her colleague Alexandra Wagner to talk with *Beijing Today* readers about educational opportunities in their country.

Austrian education:

What are some good reasons to study in Austria?

— host

1. The Austrian educational system offers a broad spectrum of educational opportunities.

2. There are 12 universities and six universities of arts in Austria, offering degrees in 300 fields of studies.

3. Apart from classical universities, which offer a wide variety of disciplines, there are a number of specialist universities as well as a university center for postgraduate education. A detailed list of all institutions and an interactive map are available at:

www.oead.ac.at/english/austria/options/index.html.

4. If you are an artist or musician, you might be interested in the country's music universities here.

5. You can also find a lot of universities of applied sciences in Austria. These universities have a practical oriented focus reflected in their curricula, which include mandatory career-oriented practical training or job-based internships.

6. Austria is a good place to study in a secure and cultural environment.

What are university tuition fees like in Austria?

— black coffee

Due to a new university act, higher education in Austria is not free of charge anymore. For students from abroad, meaning from non-EU member states, including China, tuition fees are around 1,500 euro per year.

Do Austrian universities provide students with opportunities to get practical work experience? Please describe the internship system in Austria.

— Jackie Zhang

Chinese students need an employment permit in Austria. This



Evelyn Woell-Zhang (right) and Alexandra Wagner chatting with *Beijing Today*'s readers.

Photo by Zhang Nan

can be obtained from an employer before a student starts working, and the permit will only be granted for either marginal part-time work or for a maximum of three months. Further information is available from the Austrian employment office at: www.ams.or.at/english. Students that do not comply with these regulations may face expulsion from the country.

Music universities:

Austria is famous for its music education. Can you introduce some music colleges?

— mooncake

If you are an artist or musician, you might be interested in

the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. This is one of the world most famous universities in this field of studies.

Other famous music institutions are Mozarteum Universität Salzburg and the world famous Wiener Konservatorium. Don't mistake the latter for the Vienna Konservatorium, which is a separate, private conservatory.

Studying at an Austrian music university requires going through a special admission procedure, namely an examination of musical or artistic skills.

English learners' opportunities:

As an English major student, what can I learn in Aus-

tria? Can you give me some suggestions for choosing universities and subjects?

— My September

To study in Austria, you have to choose the same or a similar subject to what you have studied in China. For example, if you have a bachelor's degree in English, you may do a M.A. in English in Austria. You will need to prove that you have a place at a Chinese university to apply to an Austrian university. Different universities have different admission requirements.

Contact universities directly for further information.

Applications, costs and language:

If I want to study in Austria, when is the best time to start the application process?

— gorilla

The general admission period for foreign students in Austria for the winter term is September 1 and February 1 for the summer term.

Can you provide an average yearly cost of studying in Austria, including tuition fees and living expenses?

— gorilla

Tuition fees average 1,500 euro

per year, but may vary by university, and living costs will likely run around 5,000 euro per year.

I have never learned German and don't intend to do so. Can I still go to Austria to study?

— Salesman

Most courses at Austrian universities are taught in German, but there are some universities of applied sciences, university training courses and private universities which provide courses in English.

Do I need to take language proficiency tests before applying to study in Austria? Where do I apply for the tests and are there relevant language training courses available in Beijing?

— gorilla

To enroll in courses taught in German at an Austrian university, you have to pass a German language proficiency examination. Prospective students can study and take that exam in China through private schools or other organizations, such as the Goethe Institute.

What documents must I prepare to apply for study in Austria?

— stopping

1. A university application form (can be downloaded from universities' homepages)

2. General university entrance qualification:

a. For bachelor and diploma degree studies: graduation certificate (Chinese certificates are not equivalent to Austrian certificates. If you have not already studied at least one term at a Chinese key university or three terms at a normal Chinese university, Austrian universities will prescribe supplementary examinations, which have to be passed before admission to degree program studies) as well as your certified score on the university entrance examination (*gaokao*).

b. For master's studies: a bachelor's or equivalent degree

c. For doctoral studies: diploma of master's or equivalent degree

3. Record of study

4. Admission statement. This proves your specific university entrance qualification and means you fulfill the requirements to be admitted directly to your chosen degree program in China.

5. If you have any proof of German proficiency (school leaving certificate, language course diplomas, etc.) you should include it with your applications documents.

All the documents presented must be originals or notarized copies. English or German translation of documents also should be notarized and certified (done by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of the Austrian government in China).

After you receive notice of admission, you can apply for a student residence permit at the Austrian Embassy or representative bodies in China to gain entry to the country.

(Edited By Zhang Nan)

Ask Ayi:

Q:I am a first-year English major at a junior college. I got a 586 on the TOEFL and a TWE score of five. I want to go to the US for undergraduate studies. Do I need to take the GRE and how can I apply for scholarships from American universities? — Thk_1oo

A: Your TOEFL marks should meet the requirements of most American universities, and you don't need to worry about the GRE because it is a graduate school entrance test.

In getting scholarships, age can be a factor. Since you are young, if you work hard, there should be real possibility for receiving a scholarship. At the same time, you will have to provide a certificate proving you have around 350,000 yuan in the bank, considered enough to cover your first year or two of studies.

Q: I am an information management major at a university in China, and I want to go abroad to further my education and get a Master's degree. But I want to get it in another field. I also have a double major diploma. Do I have a chance? — Amanda Tian

A: Depending on what you want to change to, switching can range from somewhat tricky to completely impossible. Having a double major diploma could open the door for you, though, as you could pursue a master's in the field of your second bachelor's degree.

(Edited by Ruan Ying)

IELTS Charges Up

By Zhang Nan

The cost of taking the IELTS, an essential test for Chinese students hoping to study in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, was raised on September 13 to the tune of 200 yuan, from 1,250 yuan to 1,450 yuan.

"The higher charges can be attributed to the rise of examination costs," Liu Jia, public relations officer at the British Council, the de facto education and culture section of the British Embassy in Beijing, told the *Beijing News* last week.

The increased fees will be used to develop new test questions. Other factors behind the fee increase are the rising exchange rate between renminbi and the pound sterling, inflation and examination management work," Liu was quoted as saying.

Some experts, such as He Gang, director of the UK examination department at New Oriental School, and Guan Yongchuan, principal of 51elts.com, an online IELTS consultant, have speculated that the charges were raised to fund the development of new questions that would make the IELTS a closer competitor with the TOEFL test. That stalwart English language exam is also being reformed and a revamped version is expected to start being used next September.

So far, the 200 yuan fee rise has not affected the IELTS' popularity among Chinese students. The *Beijing News* reported last Friday that the number of people signing up to take the exam or take preparatory courses at language training schools showed things were business as usual.

"I don't think that the higher examination fee will influence my plan to take the IELTS examination and go abroad," Chris Yu, holder of a bachelor's degree in English from a Chinese university, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday. Yu said she and most other students hoping to head abroad could still afford the test and therefore were not likely to change their plans.

By Lv Pinrou

Over the past couple years, the Nurenjie, or Lady Street, area of Chaoyang District has emerged as a major dining hotspot, particularly among the upwardly mobile. But as *Beijing Today* discovered in a May 21 survey of the strip, fare at most Nurenjie establishments is a mixed bag and generally disappointing, despite the restaurants' attempts to represent an eclectic range of regional Chinese and other cuisines.

Coming somewhat to the rescue is a line of new joints that opened around the nearby second-hand electronics market, quickly transforming that little road from a dustbowl into a viable nightlife option. Nurenjie part two is dominated by bars, some cool, some not, as well as two of the area's more exotic and genuinely interesting dining options. With the additions, Lady Street is sure to bring in an even steadier stream of customers, but with a few exceptions, still remains far from being really remarkable.

The literal cornerstone of the new strip is **Biteapitta**, a one-of-a-kind in Beijing – a quality, semi-fast-food style restaurant that specializes in Middle Eastern fare. There are other options for falafel and hummus in town, but most tend to be fancier affairs. Biteapitta has an appealingly informal, almost cafeteria-like vibe as well as great food at remarkably



Biteapitta's falafel sandwich, 10 yuan

reasonable prices.

It is hard to beat Biteapitta's falafel, round balls of fried, spiced ground chickpeas, dressed with fresh vegetables, a creamy, nutty sauce and packed in a soft pita pocket for the bargain basement price of 10 yuan. One is the right size for a good snack, while two are plenty to fill an empty stomach.

Fresh, homemade pitas also come stuffed with delicious treats like hummus and marinated mushrooms or mashed potatoes, or topped with oil or cheese for a pizza-like creation. The short menu board also offers salads, shawarma and other reasonable, tasty snack fare. Service can be trying, but Biteapitta gets high marks for quality and value,



New restaurants and bars have opened along a strip near the original Nurenjie. Some are good, like Biteapitta, most are mediocre – but the crowds keep coming.

Photos by Wang Yumeng

making it one of the best dining choices in the whole area.

The most established drinking spot along the new bar lane is **New Get Lucky**, the

Stoplight cocktail (30 yuan) at New Get Lucky

latest incarnation of a local live music institution. This second Get Lucky continues to draw the original's wide range of acts – some promising, some downright dreadful – and corresponding crowds of music fans, groupies and students.

The interior shows some upgrades from the original, as does its surprising menu of Western food at rockin' prices. Try 38 yuan for a helping of grilled salmon topped with a creamy leek sauce, or 28 yuan for a stick-to-the-ribs plate of fried pork sausage with sauerkraut and mashed potatoes. Wash it down with beer brewed on the premises using imported German ingredients (15-20 yuan per 0.3 liter glass), a bottle of premium German brew Erdinger (30-35

yuan) or a house cocktail.

Next door is the new bar **Pula Pula**, where New Age music tends to reign in an attempt to make the place a

Sit and zone out at Pula Pula

Biteapitta

Where: 30 Tianze Lu, near Nurenjie Open: 11 am - 9 pm Tel: 6467 2961 Average cost: 20 yuan

New Get Lucky

Open: 11 am - 2 am Tel: 8448 3335 Average cost: 50 yuan

Pula Pula

Open: 12 am - 3 am Tel: 6466 8575 Average cost: 50 yuan

Strange Island

Open: 7 pm - late Tel: 6467 6480 Average cost: 40 yuan

Feeling Coffee

Open: 10:30 am - late Tel: 8448 9997 Average cost: 50 yuan

Purple City

Open: 6 pm - 2 am Tel: 6462 1940 Average cost: 200 yuan

Pili Pili

Open: 10 am - late Tel: 8448 3372 Average cost: 60 yuan

Mask Bar & Grille

Open: 6 pm - late Tel: 6598 9898 Average cost: 50 yuan



Pizza (45 yuan) at Pili Pili – some assembly required

more peaceful alternative to its eardrum-blowing neighbor. In general, the place pulls it off and is a decent venue for relaxing and staring out the window or getting lost in the pleasures of good conversation or a magazine. Prices run towards the middle of the road.

Nearby **Feeling Coffee** is a place for a little shot of caffeinated care, as the coffee served is brewed by the boss himself and priced reasonably, considering the quality, at 22 to 28 yuan per cup.

For something a little easier on the nerves, the cafe also serves pots of fine fruit teas imported from Europe, all of which are warming and "good for health."

Customers looking for more than a drink can dive into the selection of ice cream made from real fruit and juice, priced from 15 to 40 yuan a serving. For a more substantial snack, check out the fried potato skins (48 yuan), cooked crisp and topped with butter.

With its blueish-grey brick walls and central tree hung with bird cages, **Purple City** is decorated to look like a traditional Chinese courtyard, but the menu is stacked with Western-style specialties. A house special is a take on a Mexican chicken burrito (40 yuan), in which the chicken is cooked crisp, the wrappers are soft and the wrap includes fresh vegetables and spicy sauce. The bar offers beverages alcoholic and non-, including a line of healthy, tasty smoothies.

The **Pili Pili African Restaurant** stands out as the city's only authentic African eatery. In a move that has added to its appeal and menu, the restaurant recently brought in a new chef from Egypt, who used to cook for that country's president.

Kick off an Egyptian meal with a bowl of lentil soup (15 yuan) and an order of *baba*

ghanoug, a salad of roasted eggplant mixed with tahini and served to be scooped up with pieces of fresh thin pita bread. It's a steal at only 12 yuan. Similarly inexpensive, especially considering the quality, is the *sawbosa*, which may look like Chinese dumplings, but taste very different and go for 18 yuan.

Dishes more closely associated with areas of Africa south of Egypt have long been the restaurant's strong suit. The establishment takes its name from a word in an African language for a pepper, which is featured in the pilipili soup. The mutton-based soup is served in a big pepper surrounded by fried bread for a theatrical presentation. An affordably indulgent appetizer comes as shrimp mixed with a mayo-based sauce served in a fresh avocado bowl (28 yuan). Fridays are prime times for dining at Pili Pili, as performances of African music only add the air of authenticity.

The **Mask Bar & Grille**, currently gearing up for its grand opening, is aiming to make a splash on the nearly saturated Nurenjie dining scene by serving a kind of fusion food that combines elements of Chinese, Japanese and Western cooking. The menu will include supposedly American-style fried dumplings stuffed with pork or duck breast and topped with fruit-based sauces, as well as stronger-sounding Japanese yakitori-style grilled fare.

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Professional Help

Evelyn, a college student, wants to find a part-time job on Fridays and Saturdays teaching English or taking care of foreign children. E-mail: weiwei0107@163.com

Kathleen, female, 24, Bachelor of English Linguistics and Literature, fluent in Mandarin and English, hopes to be a tour guide for foreigners. Contact: hanxuer913@sina.com

A Chinese host at a broadcasting station is looking for someone interested in learning Chinese October 1-7. He can also provide morning Chinese classes. E-mail: mchjyj@sina.com.cn

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Music

Oscar Music Concert

Symphony Orchestra of the China Dance and Song Theatre will feature classic Oscar music from such films as *Titanic*, *ET The Extra-Terrestrial*, *Out of Africa*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Schindler's List*, *La Grande Vadrouille*, *Star Wars*, *Love Story*, *Dances with Wolves*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *Bridges of Madison County* and *Sound of Music*.

Where: Minzu Gong Grand Theatre, 49 Fuxingmennei Dajie, Xicheng **When:** tonight, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-480 yuan **Tel:** 6605 2404

Movies

The Prince & Me (Wangzi Yu Wo)

Directed by Martha Coolidge, starring Julia Stiles, Luke Mably Ben Miller and Miranda Richardson. When poor Paige, a pre-med student from Wisconsin falls in love with Edward, the Crown Prince of Denmark, she is forced to choose between what we can only dream of: Becoming a princess or the doctor she's always wanted to be.



Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** from October 5 **Tel:** 6261 2851

Kekeixili

Directed by Lu Chuan. Starring Zhang Lei, Zhao Xueying, Yuan Liang and Zhao Yihui. The latest movie from China's young director Lu Chuan comes from the real experiences of Tibetan



antelope poachers and the volunteer patrol team that seeks to protect the animals.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** from tonight **Tel:** 6261 2851

Jams

DJ Fergie

His electric trance beats will leave you in a state of bliss as the music pumps through your brain. Let your spirit go! This is one party you don't want to miss out on! It's sure to be packed. The best techno music in China!

Where: Banana Disco Bar, 22 Jianguomennei Dajie **When:** October 6, 10 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6528 3636



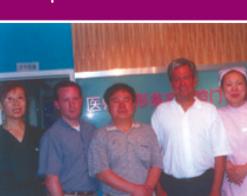
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SECRET GARDEN A MUSICAL



Live in Concert

Secret Garden made history by winning the Eurovision Song

Contest in 1995 with its largely instrumental hit "Nocturne." Since then, the band has released numerous albums and its music was featured in the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Hall Theater, 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie, Xicheng **When:** September 30 - October 3, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-800 yuan **Tel:** 6551 6805/06

Exhibitions

Li Yong'an Oil Painting Exhibition

Latest art works featuring strong colours by Li Yong'an will be showcased at 3818 Art Gallery.

Where: 3818 Art Gallery, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Dashanzi Art District, Chaoyang **When:** October 2-18, Tuesday - Sunday 11 am - 6:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8456 6664



Cartoon Carnival

The sixth World Cartoon Conference, which will open during the National Day holiday week in Beijing, invites cartoon lovers from all over the world to participate in an international contest and Cosplay performances, where everyone gets dressed up to act out their favourite fantasies.

Over 300 world-famous illustrators and experts will attend, making this the biggest-ever cartoon extravaganza in China.

Where: Beijing International Convention Center, 8 Beichen Donglu, Chaoyang **When:** October 3-6 **Admission:** 25-30 yuan **Tel:** 8497 3060

Beyond the Works

As the largest naturally formed arts community, Songzhuang perfectly demonstrates a variety in art ecology. Here, you can see as many different styles and subjects as you want. To help people obtain a better understanding of the contemporary art of Songzhuang, we



have handpicked some representative works to display before a general series exhibition. In these works, what the artists want to express is beyond the works themselves.

Where: No.1 North of Renzhuang Tongxian **When:** October 1-31, daily 9 am - 12 pm (appointment only) **Admission:** 15 yuan **Tel:** 13901244283, 6959 8343

Performances

Classic Ballet Show 'Sylvia'

Dancers of the National Ballet of China and the Paris National Opera Theatre in France will co-stage the Beijing debut of "Sylvia." Composed by Leo Delibes, the ballet's chief conductor, and Artistic Director Zhao Ruheng. The ballet is choreographed by Lycette Darsonval after Louis Merante. Dancers include Dalphine Moussin, Karl Paquette, Zhu Yan and Zhang Jian.

Where: Beijing University Concert Hall, at Beijing University, Haidian **When:** tonight - Saturday, 7 pm **Admission:** 80-120 yuan **Tel:** 6353 5709



Swan Lake

The Russian Kremlin Palace Ballet Theatre is bringing its full cast of dancers to perform the classical version of "Swan Lake" in Beijing. Founded in 1994, the troupe has toured China in 1998, 2001 and 2002.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Hall Theater, 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie, Xicheng **When:** October 3 and 4, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120-800 yuan **Tel:** 6835 4455

Thunderstorm (Leiyu)

A classic love story in Chinese modern literature about a woman struggling for freedom and love. In this tragic drama, Zhou Puyuan's wife cannot stand her husband and has an illicit affair with her stepson hoping he can help her escape her oppressive marriage.

Where: Capital Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** tonight to October 6, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0978



PAF de l'armée de l'air de France (PAF French Air Army China Tour)

Launched in 1931, the world-acclaimed PAF de l'armée de l'air de France air show will come to Beijing along with French President Jacques Chirac to take the capital by storm at the Beijing Exhibition Theatre.

Where: Beijing Nan Yuan Airport, Fengtai **When:** October 7, 10:30 am **Admission:** 150-9,800 yuan **Tel:** 6417 7845

Activities

BJ Hikers

Round Tower - Great Wall

The round tower sits on top of a mountain at the end of the Great Wall, where one side of the mountain is not just vertical but actually overhangs the valley. Towers such as these were installed at the end of a length of the Wall where the cliff face was so sheer that the Wall could not proceed any further.

Where: Miyun County, northeast of Beijing. Pick up at 8 am, October 2 at the Lido outside of Starbucks **Cost:** 150 yuan **Tel:** 13910025516

Canal Tour to the Summer Palace

Cruise along the imperial canal in a motorized canopy boat through the Beijing Zoo, Beijing Aquarium and Purple Bamboo Garden. Then take the boat to the Summer Palace where a Chinese Culture Club guide will explain the history and palaces for 30 minutes.

Meet in front of the Beijing Exhibition Centre at 10 am, October 3. **Cost:** 150 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913 (registration is required)

Horseback Riding

One of the best horseback riding clubs located in the grasslands of Hebei Province next to the Kangxi grasslands: Lush, soft, green grasses cover plains stretching far into the horizon.

Meet at 8:30 am, October 3 at the Big Easy, south gate of Chaoyang Park **Cost:** 270 yuan, include two-hour ride, transportation, toll fees, English tour guide, lunch, insurance (upon request) **Tel:** 6553 3920 or 13011171326

TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

1 Friday

Anger Management 9 pm

2 Saturday

Willard 9 pm

3 Sunday

I Spy 9:30 pm

4 Monday

Hypersonic 9:00 pm

5 Tuesday

Biker Boyz 8:10 pm

6 Wednesday

The Bourne Identity 9:00 pm

7 Thursday

The Remains of the Day 10:45 pm

CCTV-9

Monday - Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Cultural Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Cultural Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday - Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2:30 pm

Fun in Beijing 5:50 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm



Vegetable shaomai at Duyichu



Peking Opera Monkey King at Zhengyici



Enamel figurines at Liulichang



Ruifuxiang Silk Store

By Zhang Yan

A large slice of Old Beijing remains preserved in the deep alleys of the South City, a compact area nestled between Qianmen and Dajie and the Temple of Heaven.

In 1267, founder of the Yuan Dynasty Emperor Kublai Khan began to build a new capital city north of Zhongdu, the capital of the previous Jin Kingdom. On its completion, the new city was named Dadu (grand capital). Zhongdu was abandoned by the imperial family, becoming the "old city" or "south city." In the mid-14th century, the capital was moved to Nanjing by the first Ming Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang and Dadu became Beijing.

In 1504, to defend the city against marauding Mongolian cavalry, a wall was constructed around the area of the South City, which became the "outer city." The construction of the South City was never subject to planning, the streets for the most part are narrow and winding and the houses crude.

In the late 19th century, during the Qing Dynasty, hotels and provincial guild halls sprung up in this area after Beijing's first railway station was completed near Qianmen. Because theater was forbidden within the inner city during the Qing Dynasty, the city's theaters and opera houses were all located around Qianmen Dajie. Most of the public parks in southwest area appeared during the Republic of China period.

Throughout history, the South City has been the true center of business, commerce, book merchants and handicraft sellers.

The narrowest and most visited street

The central axis that bisects the Forbidden City does not end at the Jianlou, the ancient gate tower to the south of Qianmen rebuilt in the early 20th century, but continues south by way of Qianmen Dajie. Getting off the subway at Qianmen station and walking a little way down Zhubaoshi Jie, a bustling street running parallel to Qianmen Dajie, you will soon come to Qianshi Hutong, the narrowest alley in Beijing.

Only 50 centimeters wide at the narrowest point, it is barely wide enough for one person to pass through. If you find you need to retreat into the recess of a gateway to allow another person to pass, one of you definitely needs to lose some weight!

Officially sanctioned for casting silver ingots and money exchange during the Qing Dynasty, the hutong boasts the earliest and best-preserved money exchange market in China.

Burrowing a little further to the west, one comes to Dashilan. The name Dashilan comes from the large gates built at either end of the street during the Qing Dynasty to prevent street crime at night and as a safeguard against riots by the local Han people against the Qing. In 1900, the entire street was burnt to the ground during the Boxer uprising before it prospered again with the returning merchants. Today, some 70,000 people come to Dashilan daily, making it the most visited shopping street in the South City.

Looking from the eastern end of the street, one might be misled by the two-storey facade and elaborately carved Baroque style pillars of a shop called Ruifuxiang, but it is actually a 100-year-old Chinese silk and cloth store. Besides selling the best silk, cotton, linen, wool and other fabric, as well as ready made clothes, it provides a tailor service at a reasonable price.

A stone's throw to the west is Zhangyuan Teahouse. In old times, tea drinkers would bicycle tens of kilometers just to buy a pack of tea there. If you are a tea lover, or perhaps just looking for a change from coffee, this is the place to find the finest from a variety of tea types, such as green tea, black tea, mint tea, jasmine tea, chrysanthemum tea and medicinal tea.

If there is one thing Chinese take more seriously than tea drinking, it is health care, as might be seen from the three-storey Tongrentang Pharmacy, which dwarfs other buildings in the vicinity. Even if you are in perfect health, you may still benefit from the magical effects of such tonics and remedies as pearl cream, ox gallstone pill and other elaborate concoctions once made for the imperial court.

An old Beijing saying goes: "A man is half as poor without wearing good shoes." Two doors down from Tongrentang, Neiliansheng Shoe Store is still making and selling their "thousand-layer cloth shoes" favoured by old timers in Beijing.

Across the street is one of the oldest opera houses in Beijing, Guanjudou. It opened in the late 18th century, around the same time the Paris Opera House and Moscow's Grand Opera House were completed. Apart from its long history, it was once famous for the performance of Peking Opera masters and fa-

Delights of a South City Tour



Qianshi Hutong, the narrowest lane in Beijing.

If you have not yet explored Beijing's nancheng (south city), the week-long National Day Holiday is an ideal opportunity to do so. There are still enough hutongs (alleys) to get lost in, teahouses where you can relax to the soothing strains of Peking Opera while nibbling on local snacks, and of course, colorful, crowded shops selling goods of all descriptions where a visitor can experience the soul of Beijing culture.

Map and Photos by Yan



mous actors. Today, the old operas are rarely performed in their entirety, but rather as compilations of selected scenes. For foreigners and Chinese alike, the most fascinating part of Peking Opera is the resounding style of singing, the many masks and the bright, colorful costumes.

A little south of Dashilan, a few traces remain of what was once called Bada Hutong, a small residential area in a web of eight small alleys. This was once the red light district of Old Beijing.

Feast for stomach and eye

If you have already tried the Peking duck of Quanjude on Qianmen Dajie, saunter a little further south to find Duyichu Shaomai, which is famous for its seafood and vegetable shaomai (steamed dumplings), Laozhengxing Shanghai Restaurant, where authentic Shanghai food is served, and Gongdelin Vegetarian Restaurant, where vegetable and tofu are used to mimic the taste and appearance of meat and seafood dishes.

If you care to pass through the Xiaojiang Hutong near Duyichu, you may pay a quick visit to Yangping Provincial Guild Opera House. Originally built in the Ming Dynasty and rebuilt on several occasions since, it is now the largest wooden structure opera theater in Beijing. In the old days, its two-storey structure with sweeping cornices, lofty corridors, painted columns and carved Islamic window frames must have been an imposing sight to passers by. Currently closed for renovations, the black doors and grey brick walls these days attract little attention.

Following Zhushih Dajie to the west, you will come to Jinyang Restaurant and Huguang Provincial Guild at Hufangqiao. Jinyang Restaurant is famous both for being the former residence of Ji Xiaolan, a minister of the Qing Dynasty, and the Shanxi style food it serves.

The Grand Opera House of Huguang Guild Hall at the corner of Zhushih Dajie and Nanxinhua Jie is another jewel among Beijing's opera houses. Belonging to the provincial guild of Hunan and Hubei provinces, it was built around an open courtyard with five other halls. Special performances of Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera are staged in the opera hall on weekends. A huge sculpture of four-color Peking Opera facial mask in front of the gate leaves visitors in no doubt as to its function.

Making a further detour from Caishikou Dajie, you have to zigzag through Yongqing Hutong to the north entrance of Lanman Hutong. Local residents will show you the exact location of Hunan Provincial Guild Hall (now the Lanman Hutong Kindergarten) where Mao Zedong once briefly stayed.

Walking along the short alley from north to south, you will discover its real charm lies in the red tiles, green eaves and lion shaped gate stones of the rich merchants, the carved brickworks decorating the windows and walls of the well-to-do families, and the grey tiles and walls of the houses of common people.

Muslim quarter

Niujiue runs from Guang'an Dajie to Nanxinhua Jie to the southwest of Lanman Hutong. This was once the home of most of Beijing's Muslim population. Built in the late 15th century, the mosque is a typical Chinese wooden structure with a hexagonal pagoda and pailou (a decorated archway) style gate. Islamic style decorations can be seen inside and outside the building. Most of the old mutton and beef markets and restaurants that once stood along the street have gone to make way for the broadening of the road. Only a few hotpot restaurant reminds visitors that this was once Beijing's Muslim quarter.

Tracing Guang'an Dajie eastward to Nanxinhua Jie, you only need to walk a short distance to cross the famous art and culture street, Liulichang. Unless you are prepared to buy real Chinese calligraphy and paintings in Rongbaozhai, or prints of old Chinese books in the China Bookstore, you need the eye of a real connoisseur and skills of an experienced haggler to take home a bargain from one of the many curio shops and vendors along the street.

At the back of another branch of Quanjude Roast Duck Restaurant, Zhengyici Opera House is another worthwhile stop. Three centuries ago, during the early Qing Dynasty, the pleasure-seeking emperor Qianlong ordered a once popular temple that stood here to be rebuilt as an opera house. Since then the theater was frequented by the sons of royal families idling away their time and Peking Opera actors living by their generous tips. Until its recent closure for another decoration, various forms of folk art performances, such as Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera were staged here every night.